



THE BOOK OF JOB
AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING



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THE BOOK OF JOB AND THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

BY

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To THE
PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS OF
THE EXEGETICAL CLUB
MEETING IN
ST. PETER'S UNITED FREE CHURCH
GLASGOW

*A still small voice spake unto me,
“Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?”*

* * * * *

*So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought.*

TENNYSON, "THE TWO VOICES."

*A newly added chord,
Leads life to an intelligible Lord,
The rebel discords up the sacred mount.*

MEREDITH, Poems.

PREFACE

IN the following chapters it is the purpose of the writer to deal not simply with the deeply interesting Book of Job, but also, and much rather, with the important problem, with which the book is concerned, viz., the problem of human suffering, so as, if possible, to consider the whole subject, from its earliest forms, down to our own time, and trace the progress of thought upon a matter that has engaged the best consideration of men in successive ages of the world's history. The Book of Job is a classic of the greatest value in this connection, and, as we shall see in full detail, it makes a most impressive contribution to the solution of the whole question.

For this end, of course, a special study had to be made of the various views which are presented in the Book of Job, and an attempt has been made to bring that whole work before the reader in such a way as to secure the fixing of his attention on the main points in a somewhat more vivid way, than has yet been done. Great help has been given to a more popular presentation of this book by what modern scholars have done

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in many ways. It is known how difficult it is to translate several of the passages of "Job," and how many of the verses in the A.V. are either devoid of meaning, or give a meaning entirely different from what the context requires.

There is no doubt that "Job" occupies the place of a prophetic character in the Old Testament, although with the treatment it has received in the course of Jewish history, and the additions made to it, it has in large measure lost its distinctive features, and been classed among the Wisdom Literature of a later day. In the original drama we have a truly prophetic writing of deepest spiritual significance. For the time when it appeared it had its own message of hope and comfort.

It is important to keep well in mind just what the question was which occupied the attention of the writer. Certainly it was not the abstract question, Why is there suffering or evil in the world at all? No; it is not that, but rather this, Why do the good suffer? Why does suffering enter so largely into the experience of the saints of God? Recognising this great fact, reasons are sought to explain the case.

Such an inquiry has sometimes been regarded as the work of a sceptic, and Job has been classed among the great Sceptics of the world. But to our mind this inquiry is one that can be pursued with truest reverence, and is one called for by all earnest truth-seekers. The question is raised with a belief that it can be settled in a worthy

and satisfying manner. A sceptic, on the other hand, raises questions and gives no help toward their solution, at least so far as he himself is concerned. The truly wise man is fully conscious of all the questions that are of necessity being asked, and does his very best to solve them. In this case we may say with the Poet :

Rather, I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without.

It is true, indeed, that no final or satisfying solution of the problem is supplied in the book before us, but much is given toward that, and so the mind is carried forward step by step to its great goal. This has led to a brief glance at the progress of thought in Greece, so that we may the better discover the way by which men have gone in their attempts to solve this problem.

Believing that in the teaching of Christ, as that teaching was embodied in His life and death, we have the true solution of the age-long problem, it becomes an obligation to see how, in modern thought and science, room and place are being made for the undeniable and essential principle therein expressed, that of vicarious suffering. The grasping of this principle in its fulness will be the last reach of the human mind, and its full carrying out will bring untold blessings to thousands. This will be the practical application to life of Christ's teaching, and become the means of ending all that suffering, which is more and more being recognised as preventible, and which there-

fore, while it lasts, is truly a reproach to State and Church.

While the great problem of suffering in the Old Testament has been dealt with by others, our aim has been to trace it also in its later stages nearer to its solution in history.

As the book now lies before us, it is manifestly a complex work, and the justification of the present endeavour is found, not in a commentary on the text, but in the effort to make the book speak for itself, by the adoption of a particular arrangement of the various successive portions. While Prologue and Epilogue are written in prose, all the rest is given in poetry. It has, therefore, seemed necessary in some way to set forth the speeches in this form of composition. The Hebrew method of parallelism, by which in two successive lines the one thought is repeated or supplemented, or even placed in contrast with another aspect of things, lends itself to a translation in the form of a poetic measure of rhyming couplets. In the last volume of "The Messages of the Bible" Series, which has just come to hand, the author has adopted the principle of an eight-syllable line, but without rhyme. With such blank verse it is always easier to translate a given text. With rhyme the difficulty is greater, and in some lines almost beyond a completely satisfying rendering. The present writer can only plead this excuse in many places, where rhyme and an effort to be as faithful as possible to the text seemed to come into collision.

It is hoped, however, that something in a measure graphic, and so suggestive of the original, has in this way been given.

Scholars have tried to discover the metre in which this work was at first written, but on this there seems no possibility of agreement. Yet it is beyond all doubt that in these various attempts some valuable suggestions have been made towards the construction of a better text, where that text has been handed down in a corrupt form. On the principle of a uniform length for the line and verse, help has been found, and repetitions or redundancies have been pointed out, with much value to the improvement of the text. The LXX. version, although not always reliable, has in many passages also thrown light on the meaning. While, lastly, the effort to translate in accordance with the general context or sense has afforded guidance. The violent reconstructions of the text by some have, doubtless, discredited their authors in several cases, but every attempt of this kind toward the removal of difficulties, and the formation of a better text, while attended with failures, in the very nature of the case, is yet to be welcomed as a help toward the end in view.

The writer in this volume has followed the method he adopted in his former volumes on "How to Read the Prophets," his conviction being that the text should first be so arranged that it may give its own message, and in its own historical surroundings. God has ever spoken to every

age in its own language, and according to its capacity to receive. The "Thus saith the Lord" ever cometh through men approved of God, but with no other guarantee or authority, but that which is the highest after all, that of the spiritual and inherent one of truth, which has its witness in the hearts to which the message comes. Some have wondered to see such a book as "Job" in the Jewish Canon, but its presence there fully finds its justification in what it has to say on the great problem of human suffering. Its presence in the Canon of Scripture only confesses the greatness, and significance of the Book, and most certainly does not in the slightest degree detract from nor in any way abrogate its meaning. Nay rather, that shines out in all its brightness; for it has been strikingly said, "If the Jews could be saved from it (a wicked optimism), the 'Book of Job' saved them."

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THE TEXT OF THE BOOK

THE PROLOGUE WITH THE TWO HEAVENLY COUNCILS

THE CHARACTER OF JOB (i. 1-5).

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was JOB, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons, and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household, so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East. Now his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one on his birthday, and sent and called for their three sisters to eat bread, and to drink with them. And it was so, that when the days of their feastings were gone about, that JOB, sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all. For JOB said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and blasphemed God in their hearts." Thus did JOB continually.

THE FIRST COUNCIL IN HEAVEN (i. 6-12).

Now there was a day, when the Sons of God came to present themselves before Yahveh, and

the Satan came also among them. Then Yahveh said unto the Satan, "Whence comest thou?" And the Satan answered Yahveh, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

Yahveh then said unto the Satan, "Hast thou considered My servant JOB, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect, and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

Then the Satan answered Yahveh, and said, "Doth JOB fear God for nought? Hast Thou not put a hedge about him, and his house, and about all that he has on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land, but put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will blaspheme Thee to Thy face."

Then Yahveh said unto the Satan, "Behold! All that he has is in thy power. Only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

So the Satan went forth from the presence of Yahveh.

THE LOSS OF ALL OUTWARD THINGS (i. 13-22).

And there was a birthday, when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and there came a messenger to JOB, and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabæans fell upon them, and took

them away, yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee." While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and has burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The Chaldeans made three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have taken them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee."

Then JOB arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said,

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb !
And naked shall I return thither !
Yahveh gave ! And Yahveh hath taken away !
Blessed be the Name of Yahveh !"

In all this JOB sinned not, nor charged Yahveh foolishly.

THE SECOND COUNCIL IN HEAVEN (ii. 1-6).

Again there was a day in heaven, when the Sons of God came to present themselves before Yahveh, and the Satan came also to present himself before Yahveh. Then Yahveh said unto the Satan, “From whence comest thou?” And the Satan answered Yahveh, and said, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.”

Then Yahveh said unto the Satan, “Hast thou considered My servant JOB, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? Now still he holdeth fast by his integrity, although thou moved’st Me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

The Satan then answered Yahveh, and said, “Skin for skin! Yea, all that a man has will he give for his life! But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will blaspheme Thee to Thy face.”

Then said Yahveh unto the Satan, “Behold! He is in thine hand! only save his life!”

BODILY SUFFERING INFILCTED (ii. 7-10).

So the Satan went forth from the presence of Yahveh, and smote JOB with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took a potsherd to scrape him withal, and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity?

Blaspheme God, and die." But he said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive trouble?" In all this did not JOB sin with his lips.

THE COMING OF THE FRIENDS (ii. 11-13).

Now when JOB's three Friends heard of all this trouble, that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place, ELIPHAZ the Temanite, and BILDAD, the Shuhite, and ZOPHAR, the Naamathite, for they made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept, and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down, with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

THE OPENING PROTEST

THE DAY OF BIRTH CURSED (iii. 1-10).

THEN "JOB" opened his mouth, and cursed
the day of his birth.

Cursed be the day, I saw the morn,
The night, they said, "A man is born!"
O let that night in darkness stay,
Nor on it fall the light's glad ray!

May God that night no favour show,
Nor grant it aught of light to know!
May gloom and darkness fast it hold,
And sea-born cloud be round it rolled!

Let darkness dread it terrify,
And deepest gloom upon it lie!
Let it no place have in the year,
Nor reckoned in the month appear!

O let it have no fruit at all,
No sound of gladness on it fall!
Let cursers of the day it blight,
Who call the dragon up to light.

Dark let its stars of morning stay,
Let it not joy in dawn's bright ray.
Because it kept me not from birth,
Nor hid from me a sorrowing earth.

BETTER NOT BORN (iii. 11-19).

Why died I not straight from the womb,
Why passed I not unto the tomb?
O why not early brought to death,
As still-born child, unfilled with breath ?

For then I would have lain in rest,
With sleep so calm, and peace been blest.
Like kings and princes great in power,
Who cause their tombs in height to tower.

Or like the rich, who gold have stored,
And in their graves laid silver hoard.
Ah ! There the wicked cease from grief,
The sad from trouble find relief.

Earth's prisoners there in peace draw near,
And warder's call no more they hear.
The place is thronged with great and small,
And slaves are freed from master's thrall.

O why is light to sad hearts given,
Or life to those by sorrow riven ?
For death, which cometh not, they pine,
And for it dig, as in a mine.

About their own tombstones they rave,
And eager are to find their grave.
Their way in life they never found,
For God had placed a hedge around.

On me has come what once I feared,
What struck me dumb, has now appeared !
I have no peace, nor any rest,
No calm, but tumult fills my breast !

THE CONTROVERSY

THE SPEECHES OF THE FRIENDS, AND THE REPLIES OF "JOB" TO EACH

ELIPHAZ EXPLAINS WHY HE SPEAKS (iv. 1-7).

FROM one so sad can we refrain,
O who can now his words restrain?
How many taugt'st thou with thy tongue,
Thou strengthened'st hands that feebly hung !

To fainting hearts, thy words brought cheer,
And to the weak, thy help was near.
But now comes pain, and thou dost quake,
It touches thee, and thou dost shake.

Is not thy "Fear of God" thy stay,
Thy ground of hope thy pious way?
O think! What good man perished yet,
What just man fell in ruin's net?

THE TEACHING OF VISION (iv. 12-21, v. 1-7).

The word to me stole softly near,
And gently fell upon my ear,
When thoughts from visions o'er men creep,
And they are wrapped in deepest sleep.

On me came fear, and trembling sore,
Which all my breast with suffering tore.
A spirit passed before my eyes,
My hair on end began to rise!

It silent stood! To me what woe!
Its shape at all I did not know.
An image was before my sight,
I heard a voice, as breathing slight.

"Shall mortal man with God be right,
Or pure before his Maker's sight?"
He in His servants puts no trust,
And angels even finds unjust,—

How much more those, who dwell in clay,
And who on earth's foundations stay!
Who quickly, like the moth, are crushed,
'Twixt morn and eve to death have rushed.

Not one regarding them, they go,
And leave this scene of life below.
Is not their tent-peg plucked up soon?
They die, devoid of wisdom's boon.

Because their wrath the foolish slays,
And passion low the simple lays.
I've seen the foolish swept away,
His dwelling suddenly decay.

His children far from safety dwell,
And without aid in trouble fell.
The hungry all their harvest reap,
The thirsty draw their waters deep.

For trouble springs not from the earth,
Nor in the ground hath sorrow birth.
But men themselves their mis'ry make,
And sparks of fire their pathway take.

GOD'S WAY OF WORKING (v. 8-16).

I would myself in God confide,
And let my cause with Him abide.
Who doeth things both great and high,
Things without number, wondrously.

He sets the lowly ones on high.
To mourning ones brings succour nigh.
He thwarteth every skilful plan,
And frustrates works of clever man.

The wise in their own craft He takes,
And cunning schemes a failure makes.
They meet with darkness in the day,
And grope at noon, like night, their way

He saves the poor from sword's sad sight
And humble ones from men of might.
Thus are the lowly caused to hope,
The bad men not their mouths to ope.

THE BENEFIT OF SUFFERING (v. 17-22, 24-27).

Blest man, whom God by suffering tries !
Do not th' Almighty's rod despise !
He maketh sore, and then up binds.
He woundeth deep, and healing finds.

From troubles six, He sets thee free,
In seven, no danger shalt thou see.
From death He saves in famine's hour,
In time of war from sword's dread power.

From tongue's sharp scourge thou shalt be hid,
In midst of plague from fear be rid.
At pestilence and famine mock,
And with the beasts in friendship walk.

Thy tent thou shalt quite safe behold,
And find thy dwelling as of old.
Thy seed thou shalt as great ones know,
And, like the grass, thy sons shall grow.

Thou shalt thy life in fulness yield,
Like sheaf of corn in harvest field.
This have we searched, and found it true,
Hear it, and keep it well in view.

“JOB’S” First Reply, in which he Calls for
Sympathy

A KINDLY TREATMENT NEEDED (vi. 1-27).

O that my “wrath” were duly weighed,
And in the scales my sorrow laid !
It greater is than ocean’s sands,
And therefore bitter words demands.

Th’ Almighty’s arrows in me cleave,
Their poison I within receive.
God’s terrors cause me deepest pain,
They all my breast from calm restrain.

Do asses bray when grass is good,
Or oxen low when they have food ?
Do tasteless things no salt require,
Or savour whites of eggs acquire ?

O that I might have my request,
That God would grant me my behest,—
That He be pleased to end my day,
And loose His hand me now to slay !

Then would I yet have some relief,
I would exult in dreadful grief.
What hope can strength to me now give,
Or what my end that I should live ?

For is my strength the strength of stones,
Or like to brass in me my bones ?
Am I not one of help bereft,
And one by wisdom wholly left ?

My friends, as brooks, deceitful seem,
They disappear like running stream.
Because of ice they turbid flow,
In them all hid the falling snow.

When warm they wax, they vanish far,
And by the heat they dried up are.
The ways men take, they quickly bend,
They go into the waste, and end.

The bands of Tema on them thought,
The folks of Sheba for them sought,
They were confounded in their aim,
They saw, and then were filled with shame.

O was it, "Give me," that I said ?
"From each to me a gift be made!"
Or, "Save me from the en'my's power,"
Or, "Free me from the tyrant's hour."

O tell me now, and I will hear,
O show me where my wrongs appear.
How goodly would be words of truth !
Of what convince you me, forsooth ?

To deal with words ! Is that your mind ?
Words of despair upon the wind !
Would you on guiltless scorning send ?
And treat with cruelty your friend ?

AN EARNEST APPEAL (vi. 28–vii. 10).

Be pleased on me to look, I pray,
To you deceit I will not say.
O turn to me! Be not unjust?
Return, for in my cause I trust.

O hath my tongue with wrong concern?
Cannot my sense the false discern?
Doth man no time of service get?
Are not his days as hireling's set?

As slave he longs for close of day,
And like a hireling waits his pay!
Thus I possess these months in vain,
And weary nights of life obtain.

Whene'er I lay me down, I say,
“O when will come the break of day?”
And when I rise, I long for night,
Then toss about till morning light.

My flesh is clothed with worms and dust,
My skin grows hard, and breaks its crust!
My days than shuttle fly more swift,
And passing hopelessly they drift!

Remember that my life is wind,
That good I nevermore shall find.
Man's eyes that look shall not me see!
Thine eyes will look,—I will not be!

The clouds disperse, and pass away !
They come not, that in Sheol stay ;
They never shall their place behold,
Nor see again their home of old !

A BOLDER PROTEST (vii. 11-21).

I cannot now my mouth restrain,
I must in bitterness complain !
Am I a sea, or monster dread,
That Thou keep'st watch upon my head ?

If I should say, " My bed will ease,
My couch my suffering will appease."
Then Thou with dreams dost me alarm,
And with dread visions cause me harm.

My soul much rather strangling chose,
I'd rather die than bear these blows.
Leave me alone ! My days are wind !
I lothe to live among my kind !

O what is man to give Thee thought,
That Thou on him Thine eye hast brought ?
That thou dost keep him in Thy sight,
And see each hour, if he does right.

O when wilt Thou abandon me ?
And let me lone one moment be ?
Why dost Thou me as mark attack,
And lay as burden on Thy back ?

Why dost Thou not forgive my sin,
And all my wrong to pass begin?
For soon I'll sleep beneath the ground,
And when Thou seekest, not be found!

BILDAD'S First Speech

HE BLAMES "JOB" (viii. 1-5).

How long wilt Thou such words declare,
And utter things like rushing air?
Can God pervert eternal right,
Or what is just, Who has all might?

Thy sons did not His law maintain,
And for their sin He caused them pain,
That thou to Him again should seek,
And humbly to th' Almighty speak.

AND APPEALS TO TRADITION (viii. 8, 9, 11-13, 20-22).

Inquire thee now of olden time,
And heed our fathers' words sublime.
Of yesterday are we, nought knowing,
Our days on earth, as shadow going!

Can rush without mire ever grow,
Or paper-reed, where no streams flow?
While yet 'tis green it falleth dead,
Before all plants it droops its head.

Thus pass all those, who God forget,
The hopes of godless men soon set.
But God casts not away the true,
Nor helpeth those, who wrong pursue.

Thy mouth He shall with laughter fill,
And make thy lips with gladness thrill.
Thy haters shall be clothed with shame,
And tents of bad men lose their name.

Second Reply of “JOB”

HE GRANTS THE DIVINE SUPREMACY (ix. 1-14).

All this, in truth, admit I must,
But how can God find mortal just?
If man contend with God most High,
A thousand questions lack reply.

His heart is wise, and great His might,
Who can oppose Him, and be right?
He moves the hills! They never know!
In wrath He casts them down below!

He makes earth in its place to quake,
So that its pillars trembling shake.
He tells the sun,—it doth not rise.
And stars, He sealeth from our eyes.

Yea, He alone the heaven spreads,
And high He moves on ocean’s heads.
Orion, Bear, Pleiads, He made,
And chambers in the South He laid.

Behold ! Unseen, He passeth by !
Unknown by me, He moves on high.
For when He seizeth, who can stay ?
What doest Thou, what man dare say ?

God will His anger not withdraw,
And Rahab's helpers fall in awe.
Far less can I an answer find,
To plead with Him call words to mind.

AN APPEAL TO GOD USELESS (ix. 15-24).

If I were right, I can't appeal.
As to my foe I'd humbly kneel.
He would not speak, if I drew near,
Nor can I think that He would hear.

He would me with a tempest crush,
And without cause to harm me rush.
He would not let me draw my breath,
But pour on me the pains of death.

Speak we of strength, behold ! His power !
Of justice,—then who sets the hour ?
If I am right, myself I blame,
If just, He makes me do the same.

If free from guilt, some fault is found,
I scorn my life upon the ground !
The bad and good alike, He kills—
For if not He, who thus it wills ?

If suddenly the scourge men slay,
 He mocks at righteous men's dismay.
 In bad men's hands the land all lies,
 He covered has the judges' eyes !

A HOPELESS OUTLOOK (ix. 25-33).

Than post my days have swifter been !
 They quickly pass ! No good is seen !
 They glide along as reed boats slight,
 As eagles on their prey alight.

Were I to say, I'll end my pleas,
 Give up my grief, and have some ease,—
 Then all my troubles give me fright,
 As one held guilty in Thy sight.

Should I with snow to wash me try,
 Or fully cleanse my hands with lye,
 Yet wouldst Thou plunge me in the ditch,
 And friends would on me scorning pitch.

For Thou art not a man like me,
 That pleading I might come to Thee,
 No middleman between us stands,
 To lay upon us both his hands.

YET TO GOD HE DOES APPEAL (ix. 34-x. 1-22).

Let Him His rod far from me take,
 And me no more with terror shake,
 Then might I speak, and have no fear,
 For evils none in me appear.

My soul of life makes sore complaint,
I take from groaning all restraint.
I say to God, Condemn me not !
O show me now my sin's dark blot !

O is it meet for Thee to crush,
Thine own hands' work to death to rush ?
Upon my faults to hold inquest,
And to my sins apply strict test ?

Thou knowest that I have no sin,
That wrong hides not my hand within,
Thine hands have formed me thus, and made,
Yet Thou hast blame upon me laid !

O think ! Thou madest me of clay,
And send'st Thou me to dust away ?
Didst Thou not me as milk outpour,
And like to cheese me curdled o'er ?

Thou gavest me my life and days,
Thy care hath guarded all my ways,
Yet this hath been Thy hidden aim,—
I know, Thou didst this purpose frame !

For if I sin, Thou markest me,
And wilt me not from guilt set free.
If wrong I do, then cometh woe,
If what is right, my head hangs low.

Thou hunttest me as lion fierce,
With dreadful fears Thou dost me pierce,
Against me witnesses renew,
And with increasing wrath pursue !

Why didst Thou bring me to the light ?
O to have fallen on no one's sight !
O to have been as never born,
From womb to grave then straightway torn !

Are not my days of life so few ?
O let me find some solace true !
Before I yield Thee up my breath,
And pass to darkness, and to death !

ZOPHAR'S First Speech

MAN'S IGNORANCE DECLARED (xi. 1-12).

Should not much talk receive reply ?
And should a prattler be passed by ?
Should babbling make men hold their peace ?
And for thy words should scorning cease ?

Canst thou by searching God discern,
Or th' Almighty's nature learn ?
Thou say'st aloud, " My life is right,
And free from fault before my sight."

I pray that God would thee reprove,
And make His lips against thee move.
And give thee hidden truth to own,
That is the double of the known.

Higher than heaven, where canst thou go?
Deeper than Sheol, what canst thou know?
Larger than earth, what canst thou weigh?
Broader than ocean, what assay?

God knows how far astray is man,
He sees the vain, and o'er it ran.
And foolish men true wisdom gain,
And ass-like ones are born again.

REPENTANCE URGED (xi. 13-20).

If thou with God thy heart set right,
And raise thy hands before His sight,
If thou put far away thy sin,
And keep no wrong thy tent within,—

Then shalt thou lift thy face unshamed,
And firmly take thy place unblamed,
And all thy grief forget as dead,
And think upon, as waters fled.

Thy days shall brighter be than noon,
Thy darkness shine as morning's boon.
And thou thyself in hope shalt be,
And sleep from grief, and sorrow free.

Great men shall then upon thee call,
But eyes of wicked ones shall fall.
No refuge shall they have from death.
Their hope,—a giving up of breath!

“JOB’S” Reply to Zophar**A REMONSTRANCE (xii. 1-3, 11-13).**

Ye are the men, without a doubt!
And with you wisdom dieth out!
Yet I, like you, can understand,
For who hath not such things in hand?

Doth not the ear true words attest.
As palate tastes its own food best?
Are hoary heads accounted wise,
And knowing those in age that rise?

“JOB” ADMITS GOD’S GREATNESS TOO (xii. 14-25).

Behold! He breaks, and none restores;
He shuts, and no one opens doors!
He holdeth back, and streams run dry,
He looseth, and lands wasted lie!

With Him great strength and wisdom stay.
Deceived, and he that leads astray.
The counsellors He captive takes,
And He the judges foolish makes.

He bursteth bonds imposed by kings,
And round their loins a girdle brings.
He causeth priests barefoot to go,
And long established house lays low.

The words of men in trust He ends,
And wisdom from the aged sends.
On princes great He poureth scorn,
And looseth belts by strong men worn.

The hidden things He brings to light,
He makes what lies in darkness bright,
He forms the nations great or small,
Enlarging, or contracting all.

He takes the hearts of chiefs away,
And makes them in the wilds to stray.
They grope in darkness, without light,
And stagger, as in drunken plight.

AN APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE (xii. 7-10).

Ask now the beasts to let thee know,
And birds of heaven the truth to show;
Let things speak out, on earth that crawl,
Or let the fish obey thy call.

Who knoweth not from all these things,
How God to them their being brings?
That from His hand all life hath birth,
And breath each one that lives on earth?

THEIR VIEW OF LIFE WRONG (xiii. 1-12).

Behold! All this mine eye hath seen;
Mine ear hath heard; it clear hath been.
As much as you, I understand,
In nought below you do I stand!

I, too, would speak to God most high,
I long to reason with Him nigh.
But ye of lies are bringers forth,
Ye are physicians of no worth.

O that ye would your peace maintain,
For then your wisdom would remain.
Now to my earnest words give ear,
And all the pleas, I utter, hear.

Will ye for God in wrong ways speak,
Or words deceitful for Him seek?
Will ye in His cause take a side,
In special pleas for Him, confide?

Would it be well, were God to test?
Is scorn to Him, as man, addressed?
On you His wrath must full abide,
If you in secret take a side.

Shall not His greatness make you fear,
And His dread wrath to you draw near?
Like ashes are the words you say!
Your shields,—defences made of clay!

A SUPREME VENTURE (xiii. 13–16, 18, 19).

Now hold your peace! For speak I will!
And come upon me any ill!
I take my flesh now in my teeth,
And put my life my hand beneath.

He may me slay! For that I wait!
But yet to Him my case I'll state.
This sure my safety doth appear,
No wicked man to Him draws near.

Behold ! I will my case present,—
I know that I am innocent.
If one could to my plea reply,
Then would I hold my peace, and die.

THE APPEAL TO GOD (xiii. 20–27, xiv. 5, xiii. 28).

I pray, Do not two things to me,
Then will I not stay far from Thee.
Let not Thy hand appear in might,
Nor let Thy fear fall on my sight.

Then summon me, and I will rise,
Yea, I will speak, and make replies.
What deed of evil have I done,
Or in what sinful course have run ?

Why hidest Thou from me Thy face?
Why dost Thou me as enemy place?
Wilt Thou as driven leaf me crush,
And after me, as stubble, rush?

Thou dost 'gainst me hard words decree,
For youthful errors punish me.
Thou layed'st in the stocks my feet,
And on my ways mad'st search complete.

Around my root a cut is made,
A bound, not to be crossed, is laid.
I pass, as one quite rotten doth,
Like garment, eaten through by moth.

THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF MAN (xiv. 1-12).

Ah ! Man that is of woman born,
Hath but few days, and is forlorn !
Like flower he blooms, and with'ring dies,
Like shadow goes, and passing flies !

O lookest Thou on such a thing,
And dost Thou such to judgment bring ?
O who can bring from unclean clean ?
(Alas ! We all have sinful been.)

Determined are by Thee his days,
His months are numbered in their ways.
O turn from him, that he may die,
And, closed his time, like hireling lie.

As for a tree some hope exists,
That though cut down its life persists.
It lives, and soon will send up shoots,
And give forth branches from its roots.

Though under ground its root grows old,
And stock lies deep beneath the mould,
At scent of water it revives,
And like a plant anew it thrives.

But when man dies, to dust he goes.
He breathes his last, his path none knows.
Till heaven shall pass, he will not wake,
Nor yet himself from slumber shake.

A SUGGESTED SOLUTION (xiv. 13-15).

O that in Sheol Thou would me hide,
In secret, till Thine anger glide !
To think on me some fixed time give !
(If man should die ! Ah ! will he live ?)

Then days of toil I'd pass in peace,
Until there came to me release.
Thou would me call, and I'd reply,
Thou casting on Thy work Thine eye.

BUT THERE IS NO HOPE (xiv. 16-22).

Alas ! Thou number'st all my ways,
And all my wrong with pain repays.
Thou sealest in a bag my sin,
And sewest all the bad therein.

The very hills in pieces break,
And rocks from out their places shake !
The stones, the rushing waters wear,
And floods the face of earth make bare !

And man lies down, and rises not,
And thus man's hope to nought is brought.
Thy power makes him pass hence for aye,
Thou chang'st his face, and bidd'st him die.

His sons grow rich,—by him unknown !
They come to shame,—to him unshown !
His flesh alone endures the pain,
And in himself the pangs remain.

THE SECOND ROUND OF SPEECHES

Second Speech of ELIPHAZ

SELF-CONFIDENCE CONDEMNED (xv. 1-13).

SHOULD wise men speak with knowledge
vain,
Or east wind in themselves retain?
Should they to useless talk reply,
To words, which nought of good supply?

Thou dost the “Fear of God” now slight,
And reverence lack before His sight.
Alas! Thy mouth says what is wrong,
And thou mak’st use of crafty tongue.

Art thou the first man that was made,
Wert thou before the hills were laid?
Wert thou a listener in God’s place,
And dost thou wisdom all embrace?

What knowest thou, that we know not,
Or seest thou, to us unbrought?
With us the old and aged are,
Men older than thy father far!

Are God's consoling words too small,
 And words that on thee softly fall?
 Why doth thine heart of evil think,
 And wherefore do thine eyes now wink?

Thy mouth, not mine, to thee gives blame,
 Thy lips themselves on thee pour shame.
 Thou liftest up 'gainst God thy soul,
 When words, like these, from tongue forth roll

HUMILITY ENJOINED (xv. 14-19).

Ah! How can mortal man be clean,
 Or human flesh as right be seen?
 In angels He no trust retains,
 Before His eyes the heavens have stains!

Much less in man, who evil thinks,
 And who the wrong, like water, drinks!
 I would thee teach, give me thine ear.
 What I have seen, I will make clear.

Those things, which wise men have us told,
 And were not hid by sires of old.
 To whom alone was given the land,
 With not a stranger in their band.

THE WICKED SUFFER (xv. 20, 21, 29-35).

The bad have trouble all their days,
 The tyrant ever in it stays.
 Some sound of dread is in his ear,
 In times of joy, great griefs appear.

They out of darkness cannot get,
 And for the sword are victims set.
 Designed they are as eagle's prey,
 Nor know they time of troublous day.

The hours of darkness make them quake,
 Sorrow and anguish make them shake.
 And what they get, another gains,
 For nothing of their wealth remains.

A flame shall burn his tender shoots,
 And breath of God destroy his fruits.
 His wealth remains for shortest day,
 And his abundance hath brief stay.

Before his time, he withers fast,
 And green his branches will not last.
 He casts his unripe grapes, like vine,
 Like olive, shakes his blossom fine.

Thus wicked men shall fruitless turn,
 And fire the tents of bad men burn.
 They purpose sin, and bring forth wrong.
 And heart of theirs deceit makes strong.

JOB Replies to ELIPHAZ

A GREAT REBUKE (xvi. 1-6)

I've heard so many words like these,
 Ye comforters, that fail to please!
 O that vain words might have an end!
 What provocation did I lend?

I, too, could into words be led,
 If you were really in my stead,
 Words I could up against you take,
 And at you all my head could shake.

I strength to you with words could bring,
 And with my lips of comfort sing.
 But did I speak, my grief would stay.
 No silence would my pain allay.

HIS SORE COMPLAINT (xvi. 7, 8, 12–14, 17, 15, 16).

He made me weary, sore amazed,
 My trouble great hath me abased.
 As witness here, it standeth nigh,
 My griefs against me testify !

His anger tears, and casts beneath,
 He gnashes on me with His teeth.
 I was in peace ! On me He flew !
 He seized my neck, and down me threw !

His arrows round about me flew,
 And me as mark He kept in view.
 My reins unsparingly He tore,
 And on the ground my gall did pour.

By breach on breach He doth me crush,
 And like a giant on me rush.
 But not because of any sin,
 For pure to Him my prayer hath been.

Upon my flesh I sackcloth bound,
 And threw my horn upon the ground,
 My tears left on my face their mark,
 And round my eyes grew shadows dark.

A PASSIONATE APPEAL (xvi. 18-21).

O earth ! Hide not my blood from sight !
 Nor let my cry on ground alight !
 Behold ! My voice ascends the sky,
 My piercing shriek goes up on high !

That God might now be found my friend—
 To Him I cry, time without end.
 That God might right for man secure,
 As one doth for his friend procure.

A BURST OF DESPAIR (xvi. 22-xvii. 1-7).

A few more years, and then I take
 That path, whence men no turning make.
 His breath consumes away my days,
 The grave in waiting for me stays !

Ah ! Mockings now are all around,
 And bitter taunts my eyes surround !
 O unto me give pledge of Thine !
 Who else can strike his hand in mine ?

As man's reproach He makes me sit,
 I am as one on whom they spit !
 Mine eye becometh dim with woe,
 My bones in me like shadows grow !

A LAMENTATION (xvii. 11-16).

From all of hope my days now part,
 All gone the wishes of my heart !
 Like unto day I make the night,
 And unto darkness thick the light !

I wait, and Sheol is my home.
 Dark clouds to me my bed become.
 Corruption, I my mother name,
 And sister, I the worm proclaim !

Where can I calm in hope now rest ?
 What man can ever see me blessed ?
 To Sheol all must with me go,
 And have their dwelling down below.

BILDAD'S Second Speech**JOB STRONGLY REBUKED (xviii. 1-3, xvii. 8-10, xviii. 4).**

Now let your speaking have an end !
 O let me speak ! To me attend !
 O ! why should we as beasts be deemed,
 As worthless in your sight esteemed ?

At this good men amazed remain,
 And just ones of the bad complain.
 But righteous men pursue their way,
 The pure grow stronger day by day.

Now turn to me and lend your ear,
Who dost in anger now appear!
Can earth for thee be ever left,
Or rock from out its place be cleft?

THE WICKED ALONE SUFFER (xviii. 5-21).

The light of wicked men grows dark,
And from their fire there comes no spark.
Dim burns within their tent the light,
Their lamp above goes out at night.

His steps of strength more weakly grow,
And his own counsels bring him low.
He by his feet in net is caught,
And walking, on a snare is brought.

A gin will seize upon his heel,
A noose shall he be made to feel.
Upon the ground is hid a net,
And in his way a trap is set.

Fears him alarm on every side,
And at his very heels abide.
Through hunger great his strength decays,
And danger for his ruin stays.

His members death's first-born devours,
And leads him to the dread king's towers.
Diseases linger in his tent,
Brimstone upon his house is sent.

His roots are withered down below,
 His branches high themselves hang low.
 His memory for brief time remains,
 Not long the street his name retains.

They drive him out from light to dark,
 And chase him far beyond earth's mark.
 He shall possess no son nor heir.
 None in his house his name shall bear.

The West shall wonder at his fall,
 And terror shall the East appal.
 Thus low the tents of bad men lie,
 The place of those, who God deny.

JOB'S Second Reply to BILDAD

A GREAT PROTEST (xix. 1-5).

How long will ye harass my soul,
 And cruel words against me roll?
 Ten times have ye imputed blame,
 And sorely used me without shame.

Suppose that wrong I ever did,
 My fault in me remaineth hid.
 Is it your wish to do me wrong,
 And bring grave charges with your tongue?

A GOD-FORSAKEN MAN (xix. 6-12).

Know then that God hath cast me out,
 And thrown His net me round about.
 I cry of wrong, and no one hears!
 For help I call, no aid appears!

He fenced my ways,—I cannot pass!
And on my paths put dark'ning mass.
To dust He cast my glory down,
And from my head removed my crown!

He breaketh me,—I'm sore bestead,
And, like plucked tree, my hope is dead.
Like flame His wrath against me burned,
And for His foe He hath me turned.

FORSAKEN ALSO BY MAN (xix. 13–20).

My brethren all have me forsaken,
My friends have me as stranger taken,
My kinsfolk fail to know my lot,
My household have me quite forgot.

My maids to me as strange draw near,
An alien I to them appear.
I called my man,—he answered not,
Though with my mouth I him besought.

My breath is strange unto my wife,
And odious to my sons my life,
The children young me quite despise,
They speak against me when I rise.

All those my closest friends me spurn,
And those I loved against me turn.
My flesh fast wastes beneath my skin,
And fallen out my teeth within.

A SUPREME CONFIDENCE (xix. 21-29).

Some pity show me, O my friends !
God's hand on me in wrath descends !
As God hath done, why make me moan,
And vex not now my flesh alone ?

O that my words were writ with hand,
That in His Book they all might stand !
That they with iron pen and lead,
As witness in the rock were made.

My Goel lives ! Yea, this I know !
As kinsman on my dust below,
He'll stand as witness for me then,
And lift His voice before all men.

After my death, I God shall see,
Upon my very side to be,
With mine own eyes, a stranger not,—
My reins are whelmèd at the thought.

Now if ye wish me still to blame,
And me as cause of trouble name,
Then of the sword for you have fear,
For judgment to the bad draws near.

ZOPHAR'S Second Speech

SHORT-LIVED PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED (xx.
1-29).

At this my thoughts rise up in storm,
And great commotion quickly form.
Reproof, that shames me, do I hear,
And as reply vain words appear.

Dost thou not know this ancient truth
Since men were on this earth, forsooth ?
That joy of wicked men is short,
And all their peace a brief-lived sort ?

Though high as heaven his pride ascends,
And to the skies his head extends,
Like dung, he passes quite away,
Who saw him, "Where is he?" they say.

He flies as dream, and is not found,
Like spectre, he is chased around.
The eye, that saw him, sees him not,
No glimpse of him at home is caught.

His sons from poor shall favour pray,
And back his wealth his hands repay.
Though full his bones of youthful might,
Yet in the grave shall he alight.

Though evil in his mouth be sweet,
And hide beneath his tongue its seat,
Although he grasp and hold it fast,
And bid it in his mouth to last,

The meat he eats soon groweth sour,
As gall of asps, with bitter power.
The wealth he took, he can't retain,
For God will cast it up again.

He shall of asps the poison suck,
And with a viper's tongue be struck.
He shall no milk on meadow's brink,
No honey streams, nor butter, drink.

Though wealth he makes, he is not glad,
In bartered riches shall be sad.
Because he seized what poor men tilled,
And took a house he did not build.

In treasures great he has no rest,
Nor is through gems with safety blessed.
In wealth he is in sorest plight,
And him the hands of bad men smite.

Fierce anger shall on him descend,
And dreadful wrath his path attend.
Great terrors shall upon him fall,
In secret place, a dark'ning pall.

He fleeth from the weapons strong,
And pierce him shall the arrows long.
Right through his back shall go the spear,
And through his gall the sword appear.

44 THE SECOND ROUND OF SPEECHES

A fire unblown shall him consume,
And on his tent bring final doom.
The heavens his sin shall bring to light,
And earth against him rise in might.

The produce of his house shall waste,
And far in day of anger haste.
God gives to wicked men this lot,
This as their heritage is brought.

JOB Replies to Zophar

SILENCE CALLED FOR (xxi. 1-5).

Give ear to what I have to say !
Let me some comfort have, I pray !
Allow me now a time to speak,
When I have done, for mocking seek.

Is it of man that I complain ?
In patience how can I remain ?
Look now on me, and wond'ring stand !
And lay upon your mouth your hand.

THE WICKED DO NOT SUFFER (xxi. 6, 7, 9, 10, 8, 11-18).

Whene'er I think, with awe I melt,
And trembling in my flesh is felt.
O why do bad men life retain,
Grow old, and mighty power obtain ?

Far are their houses all from harm ;
God's rod to them brings no alarm.
Their bulls engender without fail ;
Their cows all calve,—their calves are hale.

Their seed succeed before their eyes,
And in their sight their offspring rise.
Their young ones, like a flock abound.
In joy their children dance around.

To timbrel and to lute they sing,
And sounds of joy from harp they bring.
Their life in fortune good they spend,
And have in death a sudden end.

Therefore to God, “ Begone ! ” they say,
“ For never have we walked Thy way.
O why for God should we have care ?
What profit can we have in prayer ? ”

Are not their fortunes in their hand,
Their counsels far from His command ?
Has ever been their lamp put out,
Or are they ever tossed about ?

Do sorrows fall upon their path,
Or are they visited in wrath ?
Are they as stubble in the wind,
Or chaff for whirling storm to find ?

46 THE SECOND ROUND OF SPEECHES

SHOULD THEY NOT SUFFER? (xxi. 19-22).

Should pain for sons be kept in store?
Should each not have his suff'ring sore?
His own heart should his ruin know,
And feel alone th' Almighty's blow.

For then what would he have of joy,
Were God to test, and him destroy?
Can man to God bring wisdom nigh,
Who judgeth all that is on high?

THE ACTUAL FACTS OF LIFE (xxi. 23-34).

One dieth in his fullest strength,
Who ease and comfort had at length.
And filled with vigour are his breasts,
And in his bones fresh marrow rests.

Another dies with saddened heart,
Who in good fortune had no part.
Both these alike lie in the ground,
And worms about them swarm around.

Behold I know what now you thought,
The schemes against me ye have brought.
Ye say, "Where is the tyrant's tower?
And where do bad men keep their power?"

But have you asked the passers-by,
And learned the facts which they supply?
How bad men safe from death remain,
And victory in trouble gain?

Who can to him declare his way,
Or unto him his deeds repay?
For to the grave by men he's led,
And watch is kept o'er his last bed.

To him the valley clods are sweet,
There after him all men will meet.
Why do ye comfort me in vain?
Your answers doctrines false maintain.

THE THIRD ROUND OF SPEECHES

ELIPHAZ Speaks

JOB IS REPROACHED (xxii. 1-20).

CAN man to God give any gain?
The wise themselves some good attain.
Does God get gain, that thou art just,
Or that in right thou putt'st thy trust?

Doth He thy “Fear” of Him reprove,
Or into judgment with thee move?
Doth not thy sinning far extend,
And have thy evil deeds an end?

Thy brother thou hast pledged for nought,
And from the naked clothing brought.
Thou hast no drink to thirsty given,
No bread to those by hunger driven.

Thou hast by force possessed the land,
And dwelt therein in chief command.
Thou hast the widows’ case forsaken,
And orphans’ arms in pieces shaken.

So all about thee snares appear,
 And trouble springs from sudden fear,
 The light is darkened in thy tent,
 And water-floods are on thee sent.

And this thou sayest, “Can God know?
 Can He through dark clouds judging go?
 Clouds hide Him that He cannot scan,
 And high He moves on heaven’s span.”

Wilt thou the olden way maintain,
 In which the wicked all remain?
 Who passed before their time from earth,
 Whose ground, like streams, was pourèd forth.

To God they said, “From us begone!
 What from th’ Almighty can be won?”
 Yet he supplied their house with good,
 Be far from me what bad men brood!

The righteous see it, and rejoice.
 The good man laughs. With scornful voice,
 He says, “Our foes undone are turned,
 That which was theirs, the fire hath burned!

REPENTANCE URGED (xxii. 21-30)

Make peace with God, and be at rest,
 So shall thy life be fully blest.
 True teaching from His mouth receive,
 And with thy heart His words believe.

If thou repent, and humble prove,
 If from thy tent thou sin remove,
 Then shalt thou have in God delight,
 And lift thy face before His sight.

Then shalt thou pray, and He shall hear,
 And thou thy vows to Him bring near.
 Thou shalt propose and carry out,
 For light shall shine thy path about.

For He abaseth haughty eyes,
 And maketh humble ones to rise.
 The wish of good men He commands,
 And they are freed, who have pure hands.

JOB'S Last Reply to ELIPHAZ

A PROTESTATION OF INNOCENCE (xxiii. 1-17, xxiv. 25).

To-day my grief is uncontrolled!
 Upon my groans firm is His hold.
 O that I might find out His seat,
 And at His throne I might Him meet!

To Him my cause I then would take,
 And fullest pleading for it make.
 I then would all His answers find,
 And what He utters have in mind,

Will He contend with me in might?
 Nay, He would keep me in His sight.
 With Him a righteous one might plead,
 And from my judge would I be freed.

I forward move, but see Him not!
 Backward I go,—no glimpse is caught!
 To left I turn,—vain look I round!
 And on the right, no trace is found!

Yet knoweth He the path I hold,
 When tried, I shall come forth as gold.
 His steps my feet have ever sought,
 His way I kept, and failed in nought.

From His commands I never strayed,
 Within my heart His words I laid.
 Whate'er He fixed, no man can change,
 What He desires, He can arrange.

I'm moved, when I to Him draw near,
 I think, and I am filled with fear.
 For God hath made my heart to faint,
 Th' Almighty gave me sore complaint.

Undone by darkness round I feel,
 And dark thick clouds my face conceal.
 For if not so, who false me shows,
 Or who my words as worthless knows?

Third Speech of BILDAD

THE GREATNESS OF GOD (xxvi. 1-4, xxv. 2-6)

How hast thou helped the feeble heart,
 Or saved the arm from strength apart?
 How hast thou made the foolish wise,
 Or made more clear what round us lies?

By whose assistance hast thou spoken,
 Or of what spirit hast thou token?
 With Him the power and greatness lie,
 Who bringeth peace about on high.

Can any one His armies tell,
 Or show on whom His lightnings fell?
 How then can man with God be just,
 Or pure a creature made of dust?

The moon shines not with perfect light,
 Nor pure the stars before His sight!
 How much more man, that is a worm,
 The son of man of reptile swarm!

THE DIVINE SUPREMACY (xxvi. 5-14).

In anguish ever writhe the dead,
 Whose home lies 'neath the ocean's bed.
 The grave is open to His eyes,
 And the Abyss uncovered lies.

He spreads on emptiness the North,
 And earth on nothing hangeth forth,
 He binds in clouds the waters sent,
 And clouds beneath them are not rent.

He formed foundations for His throne,
 And round He rolled the clouds alone.
 A limit for the sea He found,
 And fixed for day and night their bound.

The pillars of the heavens shake,
And at his great reproving quake.
He stirs the ocean by His might,
And Rahab doth in wisdom smite.

The heavens by His breath are bright,
The cursed dragon feels His might.
Lo ! these are whispers of His ways,
His thunder power,—who can appraise ?

JOB Replies to BILDAD

INNOCENCE STRONGLY DECLARED (xxvii. 1-6, 12).

By God ! Who now my right denies !
Th' Almighty, Who my spirit tries !
My lips have uttered nothing wrong,
Nor hath deceit come from my tongue.

I never can you justify !
My right I hold, until I die !
As long as in me breath remains,
And life from God my soul retains.

I hold I'm pure, and this believe,
My heart can never shame receive.
Behold ! Yourselves have seen this thing,
Why then do you such vain words bring ?

ZOPHAR'S Third Speech

THE HOPELESSNESS OF THE WICKED (xxvii. 7-11,
13-23.)

O let my foe as bad man be !
As godless one my enemy !
For what hopes in the wicked stay,
When God removes his soul away ?

Can God to his appeal give ear,
When trouble on him draweth near ?
Can he in God find his delight,
Or pray, and good be in His sight ?

What God doth work, I will reveal,
What comes from God I'll not conceal.
What He doth to the wicked give,
As lot to those, who evil live.

If sons increase, for sword they grow.
His children want of bread will know,
His heirs by plague to death are sent,
No widows for them shall lament.

Though as the dust he silver take,
And as the clay rich garments make,
Make them he may, the just will wear,
And good men will his silver share.

His house he builds, as spider weaves,
As watchmen raise their booth of leaves
He lies down rich, but wakes no more,
He opes his eyes, and life is o'er.

By day on him great troubles light,
A tempest seizes him by night.
An east wind grips him, and he dies,
And hurled below by storm he lies.

For God him smites, and spareth not,
A refuge would he fain have got!
Yea, God will clap at him His hand,
And hissing from His place command.

The Final Reply of JOB

A RETROSPECT (xxix. 1-8, 21-25, 11-20).

O that I were as in past days,
When God kept watch upon my ways !
When He His lamp shone on my sight,
And through the dark I walked in light.

As in my days of early years,
When God preserved my tent from fears.
When near me was th' Almighty found,
And all my children gathered round.

Days,—when with cream I washed my feet,
And from the rock flowed oil streams sweet.
When to the gate I passed along,
And took my seat among the throng.

The young me saw and then withdrew,
The old stood up, and waited too.
The princes from their talk refrained,
And hand upon their mouth remained.

56 THE THIRD ROUND OF SPEECHES

The nobles, too, their speaking hushed,
And to their mouth's roof tongues fast rushed.
To me they listened, and delayed,
For my advice a silence made.

I spoke, and then they spoke no more,
My words upon their ears did pour.
They looked for me, as for the rain,
As men for latter rain remain.

I smiled on them, and they were pleased,
And by my laugh, the sad were eased.
I chose their way, as chief of all,
As throned their king, in warrior's hall.

The ear that heard me blessings rolled
The eye that saw me, witness told,
Because I helped the poor that cried,
The fatherless, and sorely tried.

The perishing his thanks did bring,
I caused the widow's heart to sing.
I put on right. As clothes it wore,
As robe, and crown, I justice bore.

I was as eyes unto the blind,
The lame in me did new feet find.
To needy ones I father was,
And made inquiry in each cause.

The jaws of wicked men I brake,
 And from their mouth the spoil did take.
 Then thought I, "In my nest I'll die,
 My days as Phoenix multiply." *

My roots unto the streams spread near,
 By night on branch the dew lay clear,
 My spirit was of vigour full,
 And bow with strength my hand could pull.

THE CHANGED CONDITION (xxx. 9-23).

But now I am become their taunt,
 And as a byword near them haunt,
 They mock at me, and far off sit,
 Refraining not on me to spit.

My cord by God is broke,—I'm pained,
 My flag before me lies dust-stained !
 They raise against me up a mound,
 And ways to ruin me have found.

Across my way in force they rush,
 Upon my paths with zeal they crush,
 With shootings round, they near me reach,
 And press on me, as through a breach.

In hurtful force on me they pour,
 Come now on me are terrors sore !
 My good estate is crushed by wind,
 And cloud-like goes my happy mind.

* This bird was fabled to live five hundred years.

Alas ! My spirit hath no ease,
 Fears, full of sorrow, on me seize.
 By night my bones in me are pressed,
 My sinews too can find no rest.

Through wasting great my clothes are changed,
 They hang on me as shirt deranged.
 In mire he hath me overthrown,
 As dust and ashes have I grown.

To Thee I cry ! Thou hearest not !
 Thou dost not think upon my lot.
 Thou hast most hard by me been found,
 With might Thou presest me around.

Thou liftest me on wind to fly,
 And leavest me unhelped to die.
 To death I know Thou send'st my feet,
 The place where all the living meet.

GREAT GRIEF JUSTIFIED (xxx. 24-31).

Doth not the falling stretch his hand,
 And in distress some help demand ?
 Or weeps he not, who trouble knows ?
 Is not he sad, who downward goes ?

I looked for good, but sorrow met,
 For light, but darkness round me set.
 My bowels boiled, and found no rest,
 And days of trouble on me pressed.

I mourning went ! No comfort found !
 I stood among the jackals round.
 To wolves I was as brother true,
 To ostriches as neighbour new.

My skin was black, and fell away,
 My bones burned, as in hottest ray.
 To saddest song my harp plays low,
 And flute is tuned to bitter woe !

THE COVENANTED VIRTUES (xxxi. 1-12).

A covenant on my eyes I laid,
 To never look upon a maid.
 My portion is my God alone,
 As lot th' Almighty One I own.

Is trouble not to bad men sent,
 And to the wicked punishment ?
 Doth God not see where'er I go,
 And all my goings fully know ?

CHASTITY.

If I have done that which is vain,
 Or used deceitful ways for gain,—
 Let me be weighed in balance true,
 That God my innocence may view.

If from His way my feet have turned,
 And with my eyes my heart has burned,—
 Then let me sow, and others reap,
 And all my grain become a heap !

If woman did my heart deceive,
 At neighbour's door to wait at eve,—
 Then let my wife another serve,
 And her for their own selves reserve.

For surely this is sin and vice,
 As wrong esteemed in judges' eyes.
 It is a fire that ever burns,
 And all increase to ruin turns.

KINDNESS TO SERVANTS, AND THE POOR (xxxii.
 15–18, 13, 14, 19–22).

If I despised my servants' right,
 When they it brought before my sight,
 What could I do, when God should rise,
 And call upon me for replies?

Did not He make them that made me,
 Did not One cause us both to be?
 And hath He not my Father been,
 And as my guide from youth been seen?

If I refused the poor man's plaint,
 Or caused the widow's heart to faint,
 Or eat my food alone at home,
 While orphans starving hungry roam,—

If I observed the naked go,
 Or poor unclothéd ones did know,
 If they on me invoked no peace,
 And I for them laid by no fleece,—

If I deprived the good of right,
When help in court I had in sight,—
Then let my arm fall from its blade,
My arm be into pieces made.

SUNDRY SINS (xxxi. 24–34, 38–40).

If gold I made my confidence,
Or finest gold my strong defence,
If up in wealth my joy was bound,
Or pleasure in my produce found,—

If I beheld the sun shine bright,
Or moon proceed with clearest light,
And secretly obeisance made,
Or on my mouth my hand was laid,—

This also were an evil high,
For thus I would my God deny,
And on me would God's terrors fall,
His mighty power would me appal.

If at my foe's loss I rejoiced,
Or in his trouble gladness voiced,—
No, never sinned my mouth at all,
By wishing grief on him to fall!

If servants their complainings sent,
That with my food they're not content
Or I outside let strangers stay,—
My doors to strangers open lay!

If sin, like men, I secret kept,
When fear of others o'er me crept,
Or dreading much the scorn of men,
I put myself beyond their ken.

If fields of mine against me cried,
Or furrows there in sorrow sighed,—
In place of wheat, let thistles grow,
And weeds be found in barley row!

THE LAST APPEAL (xxxi. 35-37).

O that I had some one to hear!
Behold my mark! O God, give ear!
O that I had the charge writ out,
Which foe of mine makes me about.

Then on my head I would it wear,
And as a crown of joy it bear!
The number of my steps I'd count,
And, prince-like, to His presence mount!

THE EPILOGUE, WITH ITS GLAD RESTORATION

THE CONTROVERSY ENDED (xxxi. 40).

THE words of “JOB” are ended, and these three men ceased to answer, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

THE LATTER END OF “JOB” (xlii. 7-17).

Then Yahveh said to ELIPHAZ, the Temanite. “My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two friends, for ye have not spoken the thing that is right of Me, as My servant ‘JOB’ hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to My servant ‘JOB,’ and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and My servant shall pray for you, for him I will accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have spoken not the thing that is right, like My servant ‘JOB.’”

So ELIPHAZ, the Temanite, and BILDAD, the Shuhite, and ZOPHAR the Naamathite, went, and did according as Yahveh commanded them.

Yahveh, also, accepted him and Yahveh turned the captivity of “JOB” when he prayed for his friends. Yahveh also gave “JOB” twice as much

as he had before. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the trouble that Yahveh had brought upon him. Every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

Thus did Yahveh bless the latter end of "JOB" more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand sheasses. He had, also, seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima, and the name of the second, Kezia, and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of "JOB" and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

After this "JOB" lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

So "JOB" died, being old, and full of days.

THE SPEECH FROM THE STORM, SPOKEN IN THE NAME OF YAHVEH

MAN REBUKED (xxxviii. 1-11).

THEN Yahveh answered "JOB" out of the whirlwind, and said,

O who is this makes counsel dark,
With words that never reach their mark?
Gird up thy loins! as man now stand!
I speak, and answer full demand!

Where wast thou when earth's founds I laid?
Declare, if thou hast knowledge made.
Know'st thou who formed the masses fine,
And stretched on earth the measuring line?

Where were foundations sunk, I pray,
Or who the corner-stone did lay?
When morning stars burst out in song,
And all God's sons with joy sang long.

Who bound by door the ocean's tide,
When forth it rushed on every side?
When clouds I made its garments grand,
And thickest gloom its swaddling band.

Forth rushed it, and its sphere I made,
And bars and doors for it I laid,
I said, "Thus far, but farther not,
Here let thy waves of pride be caught."

THE WORKS OF GOD (xxxviii. 12, 13 a, 14 a, 19,
20, 16-18, 21-30).

Hast thou in thy time fixed the morn,
Or caused the dayspring to be born?
Or bade it o'er the earth to steal,
Which bends like clay beneath a seal.

Along what pathway shines the light,
And where hath darkness had its site?
That thou may'st take it to its bound,
And bring it back, where it was found.

Didst thou to ocean springs draw near,
Or in the depth of sea appear?
Hath Sheol's doorway oped to you,
Or hath death's porter stood in view?

Hast thou perceived the breadth of earth?
Tell, if thou canst, its greatness forth.
Then being born, know'st thou its ways,
So great the number of thy days!

Hast thou the stores of snow explored,
Or hast thou seen where hail is stored?
Which I have kept for time of storm,
When war and strife their work perform!

How were the clouds in portions riven,
Or to the earth the water given?
Who formed the course for rain to fall,
Or pathway for the lightning's ball?

So that rain falls, where none has been,
In deserts, where no man is seen.
On wastes of earth new life to bring,
And cause the tender buds to spring.

Whence came the ice on earth to lie,
Who made the frost before our eye?
That waters, stone-like are congealed,
And streams the ice beneath concealed.

THE HEAVENLY BODIES (xxxviii. 31-38).

Didst thou the Pleiad's cluster bind,
Or fetters for Orion find?
Or didst thou o'er the Zodiac reign,
And guide the Bear, and all its train?

Didst thou the laws for heaven set forth,
Or fix the ways of work for earth?
Canst thou by word the clouds divide,
Or springs obeying thee provide?

Canst thou the lightning's flash command,
That it might say, "Behold! I stand."
Who wisdom put in feath'ry cloud,
Or northern lights with sense endowed?

Who spread the clouds so wisely forth,
Or heavens' bottles poured on earth?
When dust is formed in thickest clumps,
And clods together come in lumps.

THE ANIMAL WORLD (xxxviii. 39–xxxix. 1–9).

Dost thou their prey to lions lead,
Or young of lion dost thou feed?
When in their dens they lie at rest,
And couch in caves in forest's breast?

Who food at evening time supplies,
When cub on God in waiting lies?
When for some prey their growls resound,
And spoil to seek they wander round.

Dost thou the time for goats declare,
Or when in travail hinds should bear?
And fix for them the months they run,
Or tell the time of birth begun?

They bow themselves, and bear their young,
Through travailing times they pass among.
Their calves are strong! In fields they grow,
They go, nor signs of coming show.

Who lets the ass in freedom stand,
Or loosed of asses wild the band?
The hills I made their dwelling place,
In barren lands they run their race.

They scorn the town, with crowds about,
And pay no heed to driver's shout.
Their pasture is the mountain range,
For grass from place to place they change.

THE BIRD WORLD (xxxix. 26–30, 13–18)

Doth hawk fly at your word of mouth,
Or stretch his wings out to the south?
Do eagles soar at your command,
And make their nests on mountain-land?

From lofty heights they seek their prey,
Their eyes from far their spoil survey.
Their young ones suck the blood around,
And where the slain are, they are found.

Is ostrich wing perversely made,
Or wing and feather kindly laid?
Her eggs upon the ground she lays,
And warmeth them in dusty ways.

But she forgets that foot may crush,
Or beast of prey upon them rush.
As if not hers, she sheds no tear,
Though vain her work, she has no fear.

For God has wisdom from her taken,
And she by insight is forsaken.
But when to run her course she turns,
The rider, and his horse she spurns.

THE WILD OX, AND WAR-HORSE (xxxix. 10-12,
19-25).

Will oxen wild stand at thy side.
Or in thy crib in peace abide?
Canst thou bind them to plow thy fields,
Or harrow what the valley yields?

Wilt thou thy trust on their strength roll,
Or leave thy work in their control?
Wilt thou let them bring home thy seed,
Or to the barn it safely lead?

Dost thou to war-horse give his might,
With snortings loud, a dreadful sight?
Or clothe his neck with quivering mane,
And bid him leap, like locust train?

He paws the valley field, and neighs,
With might he meets the warriors' ways.
He mocks at fear, and hath no fright,
Nor turns his back at swords in sight.

The rattling quiver makes a din,
The flashing spear, and javelin,
In wrath and rage he eats the ground,
And never turns himself around.

He starts when trumpet greets his ears,
Aha! he saith, when horn he hears.
And from afar the fight he smells,
The captains' shouts, and warlike yells.

THE CONCLUDING REBUKE (xl. 1, 2, 8-14).

Yahveh further answered “JOB” out of the whirlwind and said,

Should cavilling man blame God most high?
To this let him that blames reply!
Wilt thou My righteous ways condemn,
Or Me, to right thyself, contemn?

Hast thou like God a mighty arm,
Or thunder with its dread alarm?
Art thou with power and might endowed,
Or decked in pomp and splendour proud?

Display thy signs of wrath around,
And cast the mighty to the ground.
Yea, humble all that are on high,
And from their seat make bad men fly.

Assign them in the dust a place,
And secretly bind up their face.
If thou dost this, I will admit,
That thy right hand for rule is fit.

MAN'S TRUE ATTITUDE (xl. 4, 5, xlvi. 2-6).

Behold! I'm nought! What can I say?
My hand upon my mouth I lay!
Once did I speak, but not again!
Yea, twice, but now from words refrain.

72 THE SPEECH FROM THE STORM

I know that Thou art over all,
And nothing is beyond Thy call.
I spoke of things I did not know,
That passing far my knowledge go !

I heard of thee by ear alone,
But now mine eye Thyself has known.
I all retract ! My words withdraw !
In dust and ashes, (lie in awe.)

THE SPEECHES OF ELIHU

INTRODUCTION OF ELIHU (xxxii. 1-6).

THEN was kindled the wrath of Elihu, son of Barachel, the Buzite, of the family of Ram. Against "JOB" was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. Against his three Friends also was his wrath kindled, because they found no answer, wherewith to condemn "JOB." Now Elihu had waited for "JOB" with his words, because they were older than he. But when Elihu saw there was no answer in the mouth of the three men, his wrath was kindled, and Elihu, son of Barachel, the Buzite, answered, and said that he was young, and they were aged, so that he had hesitated, and was afraid to utter what he knew.

(1) OPENING ADDRESS (xxxii. 7-22).

I thought that length of days should teach,
And many years true wisdom preach.
But man's own spirit makes him wise,
By breath of God doth knowledge rise.

For old men are not always right,
Nor agèd ones have truth in sight.
They stood amazed without reply,
Their words did far from each one fly.

I waited for your words to hear,
And to your reasons gave my ear.
And while you sought for things to say,
I stood in most attentive way.

I waited ! They to speak delayed !
They speechless stood, and nothing said !
I, therefore, will an answer dare,
And what I think, I will declare.

For lo ! not one to "JOB" replied,
Not one to give an answer tried.
O say ye not, We wisdom found,
For God, not man, hath crushed him round.

His words on me made no attack,
Your words gave him no answer back.
But I have many things to say,
My soul in me brooks no delay.

I am like wine, which has no vent,
Like bottles new, to burst intent.
I must speak out, some ease to get,
Declare some words, and answer set.

O let me not take up a side,
Or into any flattery slide !
I can no flattering titles give,
My Maker would not let me live

(2) THE DIVINE METHOD (xxxiii. 1-31).

Hear, then, my words, O "JOB," I pray !
Give ear to what I have to say !
Behold ! I have begun to speak,
With tongue in mouth some words to seek

My heart in utt'rance overflows,
My mouth expresses what it knows.
Give answer to me, if you can,
Now take your place, and play the man.

For see ! Toward God I am as you.
I out of clay was formed too.
You need not be of me afraid,
My hand will not on you be laid.

Now in my ears you statements made,
And I have heard what things you said,—
As, " I am pure and free from sin.
I'm free from fault and wrong within.

" And yet He findeth fault with me,
And counteth me His enemy.
I cry to Him ! There's no reply,
And God quite hid from man doth lie."

Yet why of this canst thou complain,
That He to answer will not deign?
For God in one way speaks to all,
And doth in no way it recall.

In dreams, and visions during sleep,
Upon his bed in slumber deep,
He opens wide all human ears,
And terrifies them with great fears.

That man may put his sin away,
And turn him from his haughty way.
And save his life from pit below,
His soul preserve from weapon's blow.

He chastens him on couch with pain,
And makes his bones most sore remain,
So that he then abhorreth food,
His palate all that tasteth good.

His flesh is quite consumed from sight,
His bones, like skeleton, grow slight,
Thus to the grave he draweth near,
And to death's angel doth appear.

An angel then to him comes nigh,
A daysman, one of thousands high,
Of chastisement to teach the aim,
And graciously of him proclaim,—

“O rescue him from pit profound,
I have deliverance for him found.”
Then fresh as child’s his flesh shall turn,
And days of youth to him return.

He’ll pray to God, Who’ll hear his plea,
His face with gladness he will see.
His rescue in man’s sight he lays,
Before the people sings, and says,

“I sinned, and what is evil did,
But from my wrong was vengeance hid.
He saved my life from fearful plight,
And now mine eyes behold the light.”

O see! God doth these ways maintain,
With man again, and yet again,
To keep his life from death’s dark night,
And bid him see on earth the light.

(3) WISDOM CALLED FOR (xxxiv. 1-2, 4-13).

Ye, that are wise, my words now hear!
And ye, that knowledge have, give ear!
O let us choose that which is right,
And ever keep the good in sight.

For “JOB” hath said, that he is pure,
That God doth not his right secure.
He guiltless is, yet wronged hath been,
His wound unhealed, though he is clean.

What man is there, like “JOB,” who thinks,
 Who scorning, like the water, drinks?
 Along with wicked men he goes,
 And walks with him, that evil knows.

Ah ! he hath said, “There is no gain,
 For man in God joy to retain.”
 Ye, that are wise, my words now hear !
 O ye that know, to me give ear !

Begone the thought that God’s unjust,
 That in th’ Almighty none can trust !
 For each man’s work He doth requite,
 And all will find His judging right.

God truly hath no wrong in view,
 Nor can th’ Almighty change the true.
 For He keeps all the world in charge,
 And hath arranged the earth at large.

(4) THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD (xxxiii. 31–33, xxxiv. 3, 14–37).

Now mark, O “JOB” ! Thine ear, O lend !
 Be still, and to my words attend !
 If thou wouldest speak, then say thy mind,
 Speak, for I wish thee right to find.

If not, then hear, and silent stand !
 To say the right, I take in hand.
 For ear to words applies a test,
 As palate tastes what food is best.

If God recall man's soul in death,
If He take back his life and breath,
At once all flesh to grave descends,
And man in dust his living ends.

If you are wise, to this give ear!
O now the words I utter, hear!
Can One that hates the right bear sway?
Blam'st thou the Just, the Mighty's way?

Does any call a king unfit?
To princes say, "Unjust ye sit?"
A prince on Him no influence bears,
For rich no more than poor He cares.

For all the work are of His might,
They sudden die, and in the night.
He sends them from their folk away,
The strong, without man's aid, doth slay.

His eyes are ever on man's ways,
And He his goings forth surveys.
There is no dark or secret place,
Where sinning man can hide his face.

And God no further time doth need,
To deal in full with what men plead.
Without a trial the strong He dooms,
And others putteth in their rooms.

If He keeps quiet, who trouble sends?
 Or blame Him, when He hidden bends?
 Both folk and men He doth restrain,
 So that deceivers may not reign.

If any one to God should say,
 "I suffered! Not again I'll stray!
 What see I not, O make me know!
 If I went wrong, no more to go."

Should He requite at thy request?
 Or cast aside His own behest?
 And thou, not God, on this decide,
 And say, what's known upon thy side!

Let men that know, see this quite clear,
 And let the wise to me give ear,
 That "JOB" hath spoken without light,
 And uttered things without insight.

I would that "JOB" were sorely tried,
 For he, like wicked men, replied.
 His sin he greatly magnifies,
 And words against God multiplies.

(5) THE DIVINE INDIFFERENCE (xxxv. 1-14).

O thinkest thou that this is right,
 To say, "I'm pure before God's sight?
 Or say, "What shall I have of gain,
 If nought of sin in me remain?"

To thee I will an answer give,
And to thy friends, who with thee live.
Look at the heavens ! To them attend !
And mark the clouds, which o'er thee bend !

What harm has He, if thou dost sin,
If greatly sin, what hurt therein ?
If good thou dost, what does He gain ?
What from thy hand does He obtain ?

Thy sin a man like thee might pain,
And from thy good such one might gain !
In vain hath "JOB" his mouth employed,
He uttered words of knowledge void.

But, "Where is God ?" now no one says,
Who in the night gives songs of praise.
Who makes us more than beasts to know,
And wisdom more than birds to show.

Of many wrongs men loudly cry,
'Neath tyrant's arm in tears they lie !
They cry, but never get replies,
So wicked men in pride arise !

To what is vain God gives no thought,
Nor are His eyes upon it brought.
Why say, "Thou dost not see Him rise ?"
In silence lie before His eyes !

(6) THE AIM OF CHASTISEMENT (xxxv. 15-xxxvi. 1-21).

Ah ! not in anger sends He harm,
Man's sin to Him gives no alarm !
A little wait ! And I will show !
Some words about God's ways I know.

My knowledge from afar I bring,
And my Creator's justice sing.
For falsehood I will never say
As well informed, I stand to-day.

The hard in heart God overthrows,
And him cuts off, that evil knows.
The poor man's claim, He doth not slight,
Nor to the meek denies their right.

And kings, exalted to their throne,
Who great in power and pride had grown,
Would too in fetters strong be caught,
Would too in nets of grief be brought.

Thus would their deeds to them be shown,
The greatness of their sin made known.
His chastisement their ear would wake,
From paths of wrong bid them betake.

Should they Him hear, and service give,
Their days in gladness they would live.
But if they hear not, they shall die,
And wholly void of knowledge fly.

And godless hearts their anger keep,
When He them binds, they never weep.
They die in midst of youthful days,
Or live with those of unclean ways.

He saves the humble one through pain,
By sorrow opens ears again.
He would deliverance great bestow,
And give thee calm, when troubles grow.

No sorrow would remove thy good,
And on thy table aye be food.
But ah! thou didst perform the wrong,
And so round thee His wrath is strong.

Let not His chastening tend to wrath,
Or ransom sore mislead your path.
Would then thy plaints reach Him in need,
Or all thy mighty forces plead?

Let folly not beguile thee then,
To trust in self-conceited men!
Take care! All that is vain refuse,
Lest wrong, not suffering, thou shouldst
choose.

(7) THE MAJESTY OF GOD (xxxvi. 22-xxxvii. 24).

God works in power! This keep in mind!
O who can such a Teacher find?
Who has His way upon Him laid,
Or "This is wrong," to Him has said?

Remember thou His works to praise,
To which their eyes in awe men raise.
All men with joy these works behold,
By man afar they all are told.

He draws the drops from seas again,
From vapour round distils the rain.
The heavens pour their waters all,
Which on the crowds of many fall.

Who understands how clouds are pent,
Or how the sounds come from His tent?
Lo! For Himself the clouds He spreads,
And with them covers mountain heads

Thus reigns He o'er the people high,
He brings their food in fulness nigh.
He flashes from His hand the light.
And slings it to its place with might.

His work is seen in warlike path,
In sending on the bad his wrath.
Quakes not at this thy very breast,
And springs it not from place of rest?

O hear the noise His thunder makes,
That from His mouth its rolling takes.
Beneath the sky He sends it forth,
And flashes lightning on the earth.

Thus God lets men His wonders view,
Unknown by us His greatness true !
To snow He saith, " Fall on the ground."
To showers and rain, " In force abound."

He shuts up men, so that they may,
His wonder-working power survey.
The beasts go to their forest den,
And hidden stay afar from men.

The whirlwind comes from South-lands forth,
And coldest winds blow from the North.
By breath of God the ice is tossed,
And streams are covered by the frost.

And hail He lays in heavens high,
Right through His clouds His lightnings fly.
They flash beneath His guiding hands,
And go wherever He commands.

Thus at His word all things come forth,
Upon the spreading span of earth,
For blame or curse He suffering sends,
Or bids it come for mercy's ends.

Hear this, O " JOB," and silent stand !
Behold the works of God's great hand !
O can you tell, when God begun,
And caused the light through clouds to run ?

Can you the balanced clouds explain,
Or how from thunder-clouds comes rain?
Why warm thy garments on thee wax,
When winds from South the earth relax?

Or how from North comes weather fair,
Or heavens shine with brightness rare?
The power of God we all should own,
Of the Supreme is nothing known!

SUNDRY POEMS

Five Short Pieces

(1) THE DELAY OF JUDGMENT (xxiv. 1-4).

O WHY hath God no judgment day?
Why makes He it in hiding stay?
Why tells He not the wise His way?

The bad removed the landmarks known,
They robbed the herds, and rich have grown,
They made the orphan's ass their own !

The widow's ox in pledge they take,
To needy's plea no answer make,
The poor in crowds themselves betake !

(2) THE SUFFERING OF THE OPPRESSED (xxiv. 5-12).

Wild asses in the deserts stand,
They roam among the rocks and sand,
For food they eager search the land !

No bread have those of land bereft,
They reap by night what grain is left,
From rich men's vines they take by theft,

On hill-sides they are soaked with rain,
Deprived of shelter rocks they gain,
And naked, all unclothed remain.

Sheaves snatch they, who in hunger pine,
The oil they find, they there refine,
They tread the vats, and drink the wine.

From home and town the poor man lies,
His children hungry raise their cries,
And none to speak for them arise.

Their hands have much in weakness grown,
The fulness of their strength has flown,
In want and famine sore they moan.

They gnaw the roots in deserts found,
They gather fruit on bushes round,
They cut the mallows on the ground.

To wastes, and wilderness they hie,
And driven out from men they lie,
Who, as at thieves, upon them cry.

In deep ravines they have to dwell,
In caves of earth, and rocky dell,
Their cries among the bushes swell.

'Mong nettles wild, they form their band,
As fools and base 'mong men they stand,
The driven forth from every land !

(3) THE WORKS OF DARKNESS (xxiv. 13-18).

Behold the enemies of light,
Who fail to know the ways of right
And never keep its paths in sight!

The murderer rises up by night,
His enemy and foe to smite,
The thief in evil takes delight.

For evening wait adulterer's eyes,
He says, "No eye awaking lies,"
And on his face he puts disguise.

The burglars steal along by night,
By day they keep away from sight,
Because no love have they for light.

(4) BAD MEN ARE ACCURSED (xxiv. 18-24).

The curse unto their land draws nigh,
The drought and heat their fields make dry,
And snow and rain in floods there lie,

Their place in town forgets them quite,
Their greatness is not kept in sight,—
As rotten tree torn up by night.

For widows they had no regard.
And to their children gave no guard,
The failed in life they treated hard.

But such shall fall, and end their day.
Pulled out shall be, and fast decay,—
The punisher is on his way!

Their power is short ! They soon pass by !
 They go, and like the weeds grow dry,
 And like the corn-ears cut off lie.

(5) THE GOOD SUFFER (xii. 4-6).

As one despised by friends I lie ;
 Who calls on God, Who sends reply ;
 By righteous men in scorn passed by.

The pious fall in sorrow's way ;
 They mock them, that in comfort stay ;
 Whose foot awaits the judgment day !

The tent of robbers peaceful lies,
 They are in ease, who God despise,
 Who to their hand God equalize !

The Wisdom Poem

HOW MUCH MEN CAN KNOW (xxviii. 1-6, 9-11).

Men can the vein of silver find,
 And place of gold, to be refined.
 Up from the mines is iron brought,
 From molten stones is copper got.

Through darkest spots of earth men creep,
 And mines are sunk to greatest deep,
 Beneath their feet a shaft they sink,
 And hang on ropes above its brink.

Upon the earth there cometh wheat,
 And change by fire beneath our feet.
 Fine sapphires lie below the ground,
 And there the golden ore is found.

Man lays upon the rocks his hands,
Below the hills as miner stands,
He cuts his way among the hills,
And puts a bound to rushing rills.

Before his eyes lie stones for rings,
The hidden things to light he brings,
To earth's far bounds his eyes extend,
To all beneath the sun attend.

WHAT MEN CANNOT KNOW (xxviii. 12, 20, 7, 8,
13-19, 21-28).

But where hath wisdom's pathway been,
Or where is understanding seen?
From whence doth wisdom true spring forth,
And where is knowledge found on earth?

No bird hath on its pathway flown,
Its way the falcon hath not known.
No beasts of prey have it explored,
Nor lion fierce upon it roared.

Its price hath not by man been known,
Nor to the living yet been shown.
The deep saith, "It is not in me."
"Nor is it with me," saith the sea.

It never can be bought for gold,
Nor for its worth is silver told.
Yea, Ophir's gold it doth outshine,
Both onyx stone, and sapphire fine.

Here gold and glass cannot compare,
Nor with it change prized jewels rare,
Nor coral nor the pearl comes nigh,
For wisdom's price 'bove gems is high.

'Tis hid from every living thing,
And secret is from bird on wing.
Of it the Grave, and Sheol say,
"A rumour only came our way."

Its path alone is in God's hands,
Its hidden place He understands,
He, Who assays the weight of winds,
And measure of the ocean finds.

When rain on earth He caused to fall,
And found a path for lightning's ball,
He saw it then, and marked its source,
He fixed its place, and traced its course.

AN ADDED COMMENT.

Then unto men, He said, "Behold the fear of Yahveh! That is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

Nature's Great Creatures

THE LAND MONSTER (xl. 15-24, xli. 9-13).

Behold Behemoth, like thee made !
Like ox, he eats the tender blade.
See, how his strength lies in his sides,
In belly-muscles force abides !

He bends his tail, like cedar high,
Close knit are sinews of his thigh.
His bones like tubes of brass appear,
His limbs like bars of iron sheer.

Chief was he of the works of God,
Placed o'er his mates with sceptre rod.
He finds his food among the hills,
And every mighty beast he kills.

Among the lotus-trees he lies,
Where cover, reed or fern supplies,
'Neath lotus is his shelter found,
Him willows of the brook surround.

He trembles not, when rivers flush,
In calm remains, when waters rush.
Can he be caught, on watch beware,
Or can his nose be pierced with snare ?

Behold the catcher's hope is vain,
At sight of him his fears remain.
Not one is brave to make him rise,
Or bold to stand before his eyes.

Who hath attacked him, and prevailed ?
Beneath the heavens all have failed.
None speaketh here of deeds of might,
Or boasts of power, and armour bright.

THE MONSTER OF THE DEEP (xli. 1-8, 13-34).

Can monster by a hook be caught,
Or cord around his tongue be brought ?
Can spike be fixed upon his nose,
Or what his jaw can pierce, who knows ?

Will he address to thee his prayer,
Or utter words with gentle air ?
Will he a contract with thee make,
That thou may'st him as servant take ?

Wilt thou with him as sparrow play,
Or bind him in thy maidens' way ?
Will fishers sell him in their trade,
Or merchandise of him be made ?

Wilt thou his skin with barbed spikes pierce
Or through his head send fishers' spears ?
If once thy hand were on him cast,
Think on the fight ! 'Twould be thy last !

From off him who can tear his sheath,
Or rush against his double teeth ?
Who open can his face's door ?
His teeth around great terrors pour.

His mighty scales are his great pride,
So close sealed up along his side.
Put near together have they been,
That nought of air can pass between !

His neesings flash forth as the light,
And like the dawn his eyes are bright.
From out his mouth go lights that burn,
With sparks of fire at every turn.

The smoke forth from his nostrils flies,
As from a pot on thorns that lies.
His breath a kindling gives to coals,
And from his mouth flame flashing rolls.

Within his neck great strength resides,
And in his eyes dread fear abides.
His flakes of flesh are closely grooved,
So firmly that they can't be moved.

When up he gets, the mighty fear,
The lookers-on confused appear.
And when he comes, the sword is vain ;
Spear, dart, and arms no power retain.

He iron just as straw esteems,
And brass, like rotten wood, he deems.
The arrow cannot make him fly,
Like chaff, the sling-stones round him lie.

The darts, like stubble, waste appear,
He scorns the shaking of the spear.
His under parts have potsherds' edge,
He moves about, like threshing sledge.

He makes the sea like pot to boil,
He stirs the deep like cask of oil.
He makes his path in darkness shine,
Behind him flares the ocean brine.

Like him there is not one on earth,
Without a fear he standeth forth,
The high before him all are cowed,
As king he reigns o'er all the proud.

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK

CHAPTER I

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE BOOK AS IT LIES BEFORE US

THE Book of "JOB," in its present complete form, as we have it in our Bible, is indeed a work of the very highest worth, and occupies a place all its own, as quite unique among similar literature. It has been well described as a poem "round and perfect as a star." "It is," says another, "a noble book,—all men's book ! It is our oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny and God's ways with him here on the earth." Throughout the work is characterised by a singular force of expression, and high sublimity of thought. The great theme treated is dealt with in a way that shows intense moral earnestness, and the writer has written what he has to say in his very life's blood. So keenly did he feel the situation in which he was placed, that he was stirred to his greatest depths, and in his presentation of his case, he abundantly showed that he was dealing with questions, that were very acute at his time, and that were pressing for an answer. There is here something quite unparalleled in the freedom,

and boldness of treatment, which clearly reveals to us still, that it was no matter of light moment, but on the contrary, of deepest concern, nay, even of anxiety, that had bidden him write.

While the literary merit is thus supreme, we have the undiluted manifestation of the human spirit, battling not merely with the questionings of an individual, but with those that were then common to all thinking men, and in the solving of which peace alone was to be found. If to a complete drama action is necessary, then this work is not a drama. And yet most certainly it is a splendid dramatic representation of a problem, that has in every age, and in every land engaged the best thought of the sincerest and truest men.

This problem concerns the relation in which the great facts of suffering in the world, and especially in the life of good men, stand to the government of the world by an omnipotent, and all-wise God, and to a Moral Order conceived to exist therein. It has to be carefully noted that here we have no merely speculative or metaphysical discussion on what has been correctly called, "the vain and interminable controversy as to the origin of evil in the world." Nothing is so fruitless as an inquiry into the matter of origins. We have to deal with the great facts of life, as the experience of things shows them to be. We have to deal with what is, and try to understand it, not concerning ourselves with what might have been, or contemplating the possibility of a world altogether different from our own. In the work before us,

the writer deals with what is real, and with what is human. The great facts of life are looked at most earnestly, and in their acutest, and most pressing form, and an effort is made, if not to state or set forth a full and complete theory to meet the facts, at least to seek for some better and more adequate explanation of these facts, than had as yet been reached.

For we shall find, as we pursue our study of this most interesting book, that its value does not lie in its giving us any final, or completely satisfying answer to the questions that are raised, as the mind free and unfettered and eager comes face to face with these facts. Rather will its value be seen to lie in this, that as human thought unfolds itself in its own advancing movement, in the world's history, explanation after explanation is offered, and each in its turn is found to be imperfect, and realised to be wholly inadequate to meet the requirements of the case, which yet urges man on towards one that is to be final. As on a great stage, the greatest of all stages, that of human life, and experience, the writer causes many men, and many views to pass before us, maintaining our interest, and deepening our desire to see the matter solved. For these views are not matters of indifference to us, but concern us all vitally. We seem to be one with those, who speak, and by their voicing of our thoughts we advance with them into a fuller, clearer light. It is here as Browning says,

Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe.

Looking at the Book in this way, we find in it a most valuable contribution to thought, and therefore a great carrying of the mind onward toward the final solution demanded, and toward which every age is moving on, even with its own travail pain.

The problem is dealt with in many of its varied phases, and various opinions are given as to the solving of what is by many still regarded as an insoluble question, an unintelligible mystery. In a very striking, and finely poetic portion of the work the problem, indeed, as we shall find, is declared to be insoluble.

In dealing with such a Book as this, we must, of course, be on our guard against reading into it our own modern views, which have been formed under the influence of Christian teaching. There is always the danger that men may see more in it, than what it originally taught. Thus some have found here not only the writer's answer, but one satisfying to themselves. In this way the Book has been spoken of as one of consolation, and so to be placed with confidence in any mourner's hand. This view proceeds on the supposition, that here a sufferer had through supreme trials lost his faith in God, but that this had been restored to him at the end, after a long course of discipline, and especially by a distinct revelation of God, which is found in the Voice from the Storm.

What we shall find is rather a demand on the part of the sufferer for a better explanation of suffering, one more in harmony with a true faith,

and a worthy conception of God, than had as yet found expression in the popular tradition.

Man is in every age, and in every land, supremely concerned to possess a true Theodicy, or justification of the ways of God to His creatures on this earth, and we shall only read history aright when we see how, step by step, as in an ever-ascending progress, the mind has been approximating towards a clearer grasp of the truth, and a fuller understanding of what really is, that so better expression might be given to that truth and reality. All this wonderful environment of man is a constant challenge to his mind, and only when it is met and fully understood can the mind rest in any kind of satisfaction at all. In the book before us now, we see how this challenge was bravely taken up, and heroically met.

Here, again, we note how we behold, not the doings of a particular, or historical individual, but of man, and these not in the outward arena of war and enterprise, for it is not of man and his arms, that the writer here, like Virgil, sings. No, here we are concerned with the spiritual or inward arena, in which all values, on which hang all actions, are determined for human well-being. Our book has also been called, "The Epic of the Inner Life," and as long as man has any interest in the pressing questions of life, such a work will have perennial concern for him. By its very nature, it belongs to an epoch of high mental heroism, when amid the stress and strain of keen and acute questioning, some real contribution was

given, and some genuine addition made to our knowledge of moral questions.

It is our firm conviction, therefore, that we have in this book not, in any sense, the history of an individual man, who actually lived at a given time, and in a fixed place, but something far more important, that of man-soul. Thus the sufferings, and most striking experiences described, are not those, which really happened to any one person. For here, we have, as in a great work of art, an ideal and lofty treatment of human life, as seen in the race, by the writer in his own time. Most certainly, the representation rests very closely on the facts of life, and is in harmony with known experiences of the race. Perhaps, even, some well known and striking story of a greatly tried man, who suffered sorely both in outward possessions and in person, but who, in spite of all that, still maintained his faith in God, was then present to the writer's mind. All this, however, was transcended, and as a result, we have a typical or representative treatment of that real human experience, which rises above all differences of time, and nation. A problem, which is the problem of all mankind and of every age, is here for us treated in a worthy, effective, and permanent manner. In this way "Job" takes its place alongside of the great epoch-making works of history, such as, Dante's "Divine Comedy," Shakespeare's "Hamlet," or Goethe's "Faust." In all these wonderful writings of genius, the most intimate perplexities of the human spirit are so clearly seen, and so fully

appreciated, that their writers made some contribution of merit to the evolution of truth, that has been of abiding worth.

We are not called upon, then, to limit our thinking to one individual sufferer, but much rather, and with very much more profit, and better point, are we bidden to look with Plato, and the world's best thinkers, on the truly good man, buffeted by every wind of adverse circumstance, and so exposed to all that keen and dreadful suffering, which enters into every worthy or heroic life. In Plato's "Republic," we have the picture of the just man, doing "no injustice, yet having the reputation of doing the greatest, and so tortured for justice, nay, scourged, tormented, fettered, having his eyes burnt out, and lastly, having suffered all manner of evils, crucified. And all this suggests the question of questions, making us wonder, as if the gods gave to many good men misfortunes and a wretched life, and to contrary persons a contrary experience." We deal not here with that suffering, and pain, which falls on the bad man, who has broken all law, and thus become the victim of his own wrong-doing; but what concerns us supremely now is the suffering of the good man, the saint—that man, who is the servant of God, and of every good cause.

Such a one belongs to no one city, or place, but is a fellow-citizen of us all. And, indeed, that land of Uz, in which our "Job" has his home, does not convey to us "any very exact geographical location, but is, on the contrary, a very wide, and

extensive expression." Neither time nor place, then, come in here as having any special value. What is abiding, and universal lies before us.

It is interesting to notice, how the new prophetic universalism, which was struggling to assert itself in Hebrew religious circles, and which is seen in such great writings as that of the Second Isaiah, and "Jonah," as over against the old Jewish particularism of an earlier day, is found in this work. We are face to face now, not with a particular man, least of all with a Jewish man, but with man in his deepest thought, and in the most pressing needs of his spirit.

And our author is one, who looks out on life, with a broad sympathy. In his own case, wider views of the meaning of life are already embraced, and he writes as one, who desires to make these men's common heritage. Thus all together, author, hero, time, and place, seem to rise, as great heights above the plain, above all narrow limits, and prevent the abatements of meaning, and limitations of application, which particular identifications always cause. It has been thought remarkable that the Jewish Canon should have contained such a work, but just herein lies the value of the Old Testament, and its truest canonicity. For all, that has something to say of real human worth, belongs to the religious literature of that land, which gave it birth, and just because it says this, does it truly abide. Its permanence, and authority are fully secured by the truth, which it enshrines.

When the attempt is made to discover, in any exact kind of a way, the time, when such a work could have been written, and to find out in particular what view, among the many, which are here set forth in order, the author himself adopted as his own, interesting matters come before us, for careful consideration. This, at least, we may allow ourselves to say, that the book in its original form must have been the expression of some great epoch of acute perplexity, when the foundations were apparently being destroyed, and amid the turmoil and tumult of the days, many old and cherished supports of an older faith, were being almost rudely swept away, and the righteous were being driven in upon themselves to re-examine that faith, and restate in some better and more satisfying manner their belief, in all its essentials. New experiences were bringing new facts to light, many of which did not seem to have had any recognition in the old ways of looking at the world, and so could not be easily placed. A struggle and a conflict were caused by the inability of the old formulas to meet the emerging difficulties. The bed was all too narrow for a man to turn himself upon. Brave men were thus called upon to face heroically and resolutely these facts, and give utterance to their say, even though what they might have to speak, should be written, as it were, in their very life's blood, causing pain not only to many, but even to their own souls.

A spirit of doubt was abroad, but then, as ever,

it was the precursor of that true inquiry, which, if reverently pursued, would ultimately do work of highest worth to the cause, which had been so badly threatened at the time. Man is essentially the creator of new values, and if he seems to be destroying, it is only that he may rebuild, and that in a more enduring way. But all challenge of accepted views, whether in art, science, or religion, and in this latter branch of knowledge much more seriously, is regarded as blasphemy, and the advocates of the new views have a hard time of it at first, though at last they win the embattled field. Of such an experience the great painter, Holman Hunt, who lately passed, may be taken as a striking example. Bold and extreme negations, with all their ruthlessness and coldnesses, are seen to be clearers of the way, and so a chief means of real progress. The divine spirit of religion, as Carlyle reminded his unwilling age, is ever calling to be "embodied in a new vehicle and vesture, that men's souls may live." And doubt of any sort cannot be met, except by a brave tackling of it. Now to such a movement the name of scepticism should not be applied, for here there is no resting in doubts, but a true overcoming of them, a conquering of them indeed, an on-going to their solution and so to their cessation.

Such days as these were those, when Jerusalem had been carried away into captivity, and her Holy Temple had been trodden down by profane feet. The vigorous activities of the great prophet

Jeremiah, who was the herald of a new and a better age, with its own appeal to heart and conscience, its refusal to rest on law, or rite, or institution, all indicative of other conditions, than those to which the people had been accustomed, and to which men are ever apt to accustom themselves, marked a crisis indeed. Between his time, and the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the still later Judaism, all so external and lifeless, with its stereotyped forms of religious life, arose that psychological moment for the appearance of such a work as that of "Job," at least in its original, and essential part. The nation was confronted with a terrible catastrophe, even the loss of all it had held dear, and the question began to be canvassed very eagerly, "Why should a righteous nation, a covenanted people, those, who had the oracles of God among them, and who regarded themselves as perfect and upright, why should they suffer such things, and in such a severe form?" When such awful afflictions fell upon them, a people of God, how could such a claim as this be maintained in the presence of the nations around? Was not Yahveh's Name being profaned by this? What did it all mean? Was it a neglect of His own on the part of God, or was it punishment, or what was it? At a time like this the nation seemed faced with decrepitude, but, phoenix-like, it was rising from its ashes. An awakened spirit was abroad, and to His own, as ever, God was whispering in the ear. Just at such times men search with eager intensity into the

great principles of the Order of the Universe, especially as they affect themselves. The old easy-going view that Jerusalem, as God's vineyard, was inviolable, a thought dear in the early teaching of Isaiah, could not be maintained now that the Holy City had been so manifestly violated. But a great-souled man, a true representative of Israel's best faith, and piety, could not readily abandon his conviction, that Jerusalem was yet dear unto God. Instead of this time being "an ill occasion for searching into the broad problems of human destiny," as Froude held, we are inclined to believe that some great prophet-soul, at war with the central falsehood of the people's creed, a true Jew indeed, but holding that God could not forsake His own, or falter in His purpose, was urged on by a power, all divine, to seek for some worthy explanation. And the work before us now contains the result of that divine afflatus, that true inspiration. Here, in the Book of "Job," we have that sought-for explanation appearing in its various forms, and in a regularly progressing argument.

The book probably was written in its original form about the year 400 B.C., but as we have it now it has many marks of being a composite work, like the great Iliad of Homer. One supreme master-mind is at work in what is the heart and kernel of the book, and to that central and original nucleus, additions of later days, and of lesser value were made. There is, of course, a unity in what is before us, but that has been secured

by placing the passage about the restoration of "Job" at the end, and inserting the passage with the Voice from the Whirlwind, and the speeches of "Elihu," as well as several other poetic pieces, in the body of the work. The Septuagint version, which is fully four hundred lines shorter than the Hebrew, would suggest that this book at one time existed in a very much shorter form. The speeches of "Elihu," *e.g.*, are not in the original Greek, and as he was not one of the Friends in the early group, the added character of this passage appears incontrovertible now. An attempt has been made to supply the original Hebrew, but this is no easy task, and could not in any way satisfy the conditions. The text, as it lies to hand, is itself a cause of much mistrust, with its insertions, corruptions, and repetitions. A brave endeavour has been made by many, also, to discover the metre, in which it was written. From this effort much light has, undoubtedly, been thrown on many difficult places.

In the book, as a whole, we have the following important portions, each of which, as we shall see, has its own teaching to give us.

I. There is the Prologue in chapters i., ii.,—with the two heavenly Councils, and their determinations, altogether beyond the knowledge of the actors on the arena of earth. Here, as in the mind of God, and therefore, as the deep conviction of the writer, so as to enter into the very plan of the whole work as an essential presupposition, never to be called in ques-

tion, the goodness of "Job," as Yahveh's servant, is taken for granted. In answer to the cynical suggestion that all his prosperity is the direct result of special favour on the part of God, as a reward for goodness, the prosperity is withdrawn, and the goodness, in no way affected, is seen to remain. The lesson is thus taught, that goodness is independent of any reward at all, and is the abiding possession of the soul. The suffering, which is sent, can then only come as a public demonstration of the superiority of goodness to, and its independence of, any favourable lot. In this teaching we have a splendid truth, a valuable contribution, but by no means a final or complete solution of the problem.

II. Following upon the Prologue we have the great controversy between "Job," and his three Friends. In these speeches are contained the views of suffering, which were accepted in the days before the Captivity, and which found their hard and fast expression in Deuteronomy, and in the early Wisdom literature of the Book of Proverbs. According to this teaching, the good man does not suffer. Suffering is the direct result of, and punishment for, wrong-doing. This is the central portion, and extends from chap. iii. to chap. xxxi. As we believe, the chief writer wrote this, and in it gave expression to his own views in what he made "Job" say. Chap. xxviii. is a separate piece, in agreement with the teaching of portion IV. below.

III. After "Job" has ceased to speak, come the

“Elihu” speeches, which occupy the next portion in chaps. xxxii.-xxxvii. This part supplies a third, and quite a distinct view of suffering. It is now declared to be disciplinary, so that in the case of the good man it comes in no way as punishment, but as chastisement, to make him better, and so a more worthy child of God.

IV. Chaps. xxxviii.-xlvi. 6 contain the “Yah-veh” interposition, or the Voice out of the Storm. Here it is distinctly taught that man should raise no question about suffering, or its purpose, but acknowledging his own ignorance, and in full view of the glory and majesty of God, and all the wonder and mystery of the world, which He hath made, with a true spirit of worship and resignation should “lie low and say nothing.”

V. As the last part we have the conclusion or Epilogue in chap. xlvi. 7-17, which tells of suffering having passed away, and the former outward prosperity in larger measure restored. From this point of view, suffering is only something of a temporary kind.

Here there are at least five distinct views of the meaning of suffering, and the very interesting question has been raised :—To which of them does the author of the book in its final form give his adhesion? Very much can be said for the opinion of those scholars, who hold that his view is expressed in the Prologue, where the supreme worth of goodness, in and for itself, apart from all change of circumstance, is clearly set forth. Others find the author’s view set out in the

speeches of "Elihu," as to the disciplinary nature of suffering. While yet again it has been held, that the conclusion of the whole book is to be seen in "the profound words" of chap. xlvi. 6, viz., that no answer can be given to a question, which ought never to be asked at all by man.

To us it is no concern to discover some one view as definitely taught. What we value most of all is the way in which so many views are brought forward, each having some element of truth in it, and thus all together contributing some helpful suggestion towards the finding of a complete solution. We cannot find the final, or satisfying view in this great work, but we learn much from it, as we see much of value in its course. Geology shows us how the different *strata* forming the earth's crust, and lying one upon the other, reveal the order, in which the whole was built up in the long millenniums of time. So as we read such a book, as this of "JOB," we think that we trace some of the great successive waves of human thought, and mark with interest the results as seen in what has been left behind on the shore of time. Gratefully we receive each successive contribution, as the best its own time had to give. Step by step we see how our present views have been reached, and from our high standpoint we are able to look down, and back upon all the long movement of the ages. In this book, as in a geological chart, we can discover the way along which men have travelled, in their efforts to build up the truth, and helped on to that great super-

structure, in which "we live, and move, and have our being." When we bear in mind that the "Yahveh" speech was written before the speeches of "Elihu," and notice that in the final form of the book, it is placed after these, we are bidden to see that the last editor of the work not only gave expression to his disapproval of the views of the Friends, but also to those of "Elihu." Thus two views are condemned, and two views are allowed to remain. For it is taught that suffering in the case of the good man is not the punishment of sin, as the Friends held, nor is it a process of disciplinary chastisement, as "Elihu" declared. But, as set forth in the Prologue, it may be a public test of goodness, or some great dispensation of God, which is wholly beyond human understanding, and therefore something, to which man should submit with all humility and reverence.

Most probably, this is the view of the last writer. This is also the view clearly and beautifully set forth in the poem on Wisdom, in chap. xxviii., most likely a contemporaneous contribution, in which Wisdom is declared to be unsearchable, a possession of God, and known only to Him.

The book thus does not meet all our difficulties, or show us how to estimate truly the losses of life. If these had been seen as a gateway to a higher, and better service, comfort might have come in the dark and cloudy day. Much, however, yet remained for the human spirit to discover, in the divine unfolding and revelation of God Himself, in the coming ages.

CHAPTER II

THE TEACHING OF THE PROLOGUE—SUFFERING VIEWED AS THE TEST OF GOODNESS

THE poem opens in a very striking, and dramatic manner, by making the life of man a theme of discussion in the Heavenly Council, and this example Goethe has followed in his great work of "Faust." Thus the affairs of man on this earth are viewed, not as a matter of indifference to God, but as something, in which He is most really interested and deeply concerned. It is not true to say that—

God ne'er troubles Him about
Us or our doings.

And yet this was the accepted opinion of the Epicurean philosophers, who taught that the gods lived their own life, apart from that of men, and took no interest at all in them. The life of God, as one of perfect calm and unruffled bliss, has been viewed as one in complete separateness, and isolation from that of man, which is so full of striving and constant unrest. No point of contact

has been conceived between the perfect and the imperfect. And thus God and man remained in a complete opposition, and no bridging of the great gulf between them seemed at all possible. The gods were even thought of as antagonistic to man, and jealous of his progress. Against this false view, we have the splendid protest of Æschylus, in his "Prometheus Bound." The awakening conscience of mankind demanded a more worthy view of God, and expressed its deep and true conviction, that the divine and the human cannot stand in irreconcilable antagonism, and that it is altogether unworthy of man so to think. This true thought is fundamental in the Old Testament, and characteristic of the prophets. In the prophetic narrative of Israel's beginning at the Exodus time, the divine interest in mankind is most graphically set forth. God is represented as seeing, and being deeply affected by, the sufferings of His people. He knew their sorrows, and, thought of them as dwelling in the heights, He came down to deliver them. So here in the Prologue, it is assumed at once, without a shadow of doubt, that what concerns man has an interest for God, and that every acute problem, which arises in the human mind, is one that is also canvassed in the Heavenly Councils.

It is of importance, then, at the very outset of our study, to see how almost all the difficulty, that is caused by suffering in man's life, arises from the view that is taken of God and His

relation to man. A spiritual conception of that relation will prevent any external and inadequate explanation from filling our mind's vision. No divorce can be allowed to come or to stand between God and man. The opposition, which exists in thought, must be overcome. The differences, which emerge in the process of thinking, as the mind goes on to a fuller, and clearer understanding of truth have to be surmounted, and thus a greater approximation made to a complete and final statement.

On the one hand, it has been held with emphasis, that the divine stands in a higher scale of being than the human, so that human thought can never do justice to the divine, or worthily express what it means. While, on the other hand, when thinkers have been brought face to face with the varied and numerous protests, which the human spirit in all ages and countries, has made against imperfect and inadequate conceptions of the divine, as if the gods were hindering and hampering human progress, and have been impressed with the thought that the mind had ever higher views of the gods, than had yet been expressed in the popular creeds, they allowed themselves strangely to speak of man as being in a higher scale of being than God. What we have ever to keep well in mind is that man's thought of God is always advancing, and so he is ever being brought nearer to a truer realisation of what the divine is in itself. The higher and the worthier the conception he has of God, the

nearer is man to a knowledge of God as He is.
When the modern poet sings,

For the loving worm within its clod,
Were diviner than a loveless God,

surely all would agree, and unite in expressing their sorrow, that at any time, or in any land, wholly poor and unworthy conceptions were formed or held as to the character of the Supreme or divine. When men think worthily of God, they also think worthily of man, who is made in His image, and likeness. If man is a worthy object of the divine care and consideration, highest value is at once set upon humanity, and it is viewed as having the infinite capacity of being raised to the very highest level. For in a communion and fellowship with God, based upon a clear and distinct knowledge of God, man finds his goal and destiny. In the divine the best thought of the human mind finds its embodiment and expression, and it is the obvious aim of the divine to raise man to greatest glory.

As long as men magnified the outward and unspiritual, as long as power rather than love held control in their thoughts and actions towards one another, so long they made them gods in whom was found this attribute chiefly, but when the inner and spiritual received its adequate place and treatment, when warmer, and more loving modes of thought determined life's activities, then men thought better of God, and found in Him their best and highest ideals.

As Prometheus was charged with a too free utterance against the ruling Zeus, so many have found in "Job" in the same way, in his outbursts of indignation against what he rightly regarded as a wrong and false interpretation of the divine dealings with him, some kind of an attack upon God Himself. Let us, therefore, keep this before us, that an earnest protest against an incomplete conception of God, an inadequate expression of His nature, or imperfect explanation of His ways, is by no means irreverent, but only a loud call, to which the human spirit is bound, sooner or later, to respond, for a higher and better conception, expression, and explanation of all that concerns God and truth.

And yet it has taken the long agony and travail of the human spirit to receive, and more fully express the truth about God in some worthier manner. On the one side, there is a revealing God, ever making Himself known more and more to men, as they were able to receive Him as so revealed. And on the other side, there has been a discovering man, knowing more and more of himself, finding out his own possibilities, and aspirations in higher measure, and so learning more of God as time rolled on. Human progress and Divine revelation are thus ever closely bound up together. They truly advance side by side, and ever in most intimate relation.

Sometimes we come across such a phrase as "the God of the Theologians," and the meaning must be that conception of God, which up to that

time had been formed. An effort to enlarge it, and to make it more adequate deserves the highest praise. For whatever raises the value of an important asset of the mind does great service to the cause of truth, even though it seems to come at first by way of loud protest.

The time, when the writer of the speeches of "Job" found voice for his supreme protest, must almost have synchronised with the great days of the Greek Tragedians in Athens (484–430 B.C.). For as we shall see more fully, there is a kinship and sympathy in them with what we find in "Job."

Æschylus made Prometheus say,—

Ye see me shackled,
Because of my great love of man.

And as we look at the great sufferer brought before us in this work, are we not ready to exclaim with deep emotion?—Here surely is one shackled with sorrow's bonds, because of his great love for goodness!

On the very threshold of our book, then, we have a high and noble conception of God. He is already viewed as One who has loftiest claims upon the love and allegiance of mankind. In the Prologue the supremacy of God is well secured, and this great danger to religion avoided, which arises from the imagination, that God is, in His real and essential nature, only what man at any time has thought him to be. For, on the contrary, the divine always transcends any actual reach of human thought in its onward striving, and attainment.

God is here seen as sitting in His heavenly Council, and surrounded by His angel throng, consulting as with them concerning man's welfare. He, who sits on the throne of the Universe is not indifferent, then, but supremely concerned. In presence of life's troubles, and the slow evolution and progress of the good and true, human despair has cried out in Carlyle's words, "God sits in heaven, and does nothing!" Our writer, too, sees Him sitting there, but he sees Him in earnest consultation, and he sees Him doing everything in the world by the agency of His ministering servants,—not only the prosperity of men, but also their suffering coming by His most wise decree. But how from such a One can suffering come? cries the impatient heart. This is the question, with which the whole book deals. If the God, who sits upon the throne is to command our allegiance, He must commend Himself to man's best thought, and answer in a satisfying way those throbbing questions, which spring only from the deepest, truest faith, and not from any unworthy feeling at all.

It is deserving of notice also, here, that God is described as Yahveh, the sacred Name of God in Israel. Such character and attributes, as belonged to this Yahveh-God, in the best thought of the prophets, are by the writer held dear. This holy Name therefore is not dragged by him through the fields of controversy. It was the great Yahveh, who had in His control after all the lot of His people. In keeping with his plan this

Name is not used in the speeches, nor by the Friends. Things, therefore, that might have been said, without much hesitation, about God as conceived under another or other names, could not be said about God as Yahveh. Do we not thus see the writer contending even here for a worthier, fuller view of God? And so in the light of the higher revelation, which Jesus has given men, we may say that many things, which could be said against Yahveh, even as viewed by the very best prophetic thought, cannot be said with any degree of truth at all against our Father-God, as we now see Him revealed in Christ. Attacks against an earlier and imperfect view cease to have any weight, as against a later and better one. Nay, indeed, in line with what we have already said, we may even welcome such, as doing a useful service for their time. Recognising the worth of many past attacks, as not really on the heart of the faith, but on the out-forts raised in its defence, and with an intense love for the truth itself, and being ready to give up any element in our present thinking, which may conflict with the best, we would invite attention to what is now presented by the Church's truest teachers, and seek to gather all men around our common Father's footstool.

Passing on now to look more in detail at the contents of the Prologue, we notice the boldness of the undertaking in the use of the plan of a heavenly Council. By so doing, the writer places his own thought, as it were, alongside that of

God. The scheme of such a Council allows him to make a great contribution of his own, at a great crisis in the evolution of thought. Telling us what God thinks and does, the author tells us what he himself is thinking, and what he himself would do. Here, then, must be found the writer's best and highest view, and it is always in his mind ever lying at the background of all his thinking. By it all other developments in the plot are to be judged, and these stand out in contrast, and relief, just because of what is here. How much, then, can be said for the view that the original poem did not include either the "Elihu" or the "Yahveh" passages, and that the Epilogue, with its restoration of the sufferer, followed immediately after chapter xxxi., where we are told, that the words of "Job" are ended (see page 63). The original poem would thus have been a very compact and complete piece. The words of "Job" were vindicated, and the sufferings, which had not come as punishment, as "Job" so hotly maintained, came as the writer saw, as a wise permission of God, for a distinct purpose, the purpose set forth in the Prologue.

In answer then to the question, Why does suffering come to man? Why does suffering come to God's own people? our writer replies with firm conviction thus God sends it all, as a test of goodness, to prove to the whole world, that, however tried the righteous may be, their goodness will remain altogether unaffected.

To prove his point, he takes as an illustration

a life lived in the most favourable conditions, a life wanting nothing at all. It is, of course, the life of a good man, one, who complied with all the requirements of the highest standard of those times, a recognised servant of God, "one that feared God, and eschewed evil." The goodness of his hero is an essential condition, a *sine qua non*, and the divine approval of this man is assumed. "Job" is described as "My servant." He is thus a representative person, one in whom God hath not beheld iniquity, nor seen any perverseness. The standard, by which "Job" was measured, may not pass muster now that we have the Sermon on the Mount, with its deep searching into the very motives of every action, but we must remember that judged as he was then, "Job" was a perfect man. This is the position, which the writer assigns to "Job," and in maintaining his integrity in the very strongest terms, he does only what he is expected to do. The problem is, Why do the righteous suffer? The purpose is to show, that the old view is wrong, which makes suffering to be a punishment of sin. "Job" speaks and that most strongly only to maintain his innocence. The Friends make their speeches to prove, in opposition to the writer's view, that the only cause of suffering in the world is wrong-doing.

In order to make the test as severe as it could possibly be made, the hero is introduced to us as having every kind of outward prosperity, and of domestic bliss, in a devoted wife, and loving sons

and daughters. Great goodness and highest fortune are here together. And the deep searching question is asked by the Satan, or Accuser, Is there any connection between these two things,—character and lot?

It is to be observed, that the Satan is here as a member of the heavenly Council. The writer has no knowledge of the later view that the Satan was a fallen, and therefore cast out, angel. He is not even the Accuser in such a pronounced form, as in Zechariah's prophecy, nor the Tempter, as in the latest of the Canonical writings, the Books of Chronicles. Here he is an executive angel, who finds out fault, and has the power of inflicting suffering, in its many and varied forms. When the cynical remark is made, that the goodness of "Job" was the result of his outward prosperity, at once this momentous issue had to be decided. It would never do for it to be for a moment supposed that goodness in God's servant or people could be dependent on a favourable set of circumstances. Were that so, goodness would lose all its moral and spiritual value. The whole theory of the worth of morality and of moral values would fall to the ground, and great would be the loss to all man's best interests. Certainly all around, men were seeking a reward for virtue, and were imagining that goodness all sprung out of the idea that it was the best policy, and paid best. But this view was abhorrent to our author, and he makes haste to show that his view is broad based on a real and true experience of life, as he knows it at its best.

Let us clearly notice that the suggestion that "Job" does not fear God for nought, is put into the mouth of the Satan, and thereby declared to be obnoxious in the highest degree. And this also the author impresses upon us in the situation created, that God believes in the disinterestedness of goodness. But the doubt as to this vital truth having been raised, the matter must at once be put to the proof and test. A demonstration must be given to all, that true and essential goodness, such as that which belongs to the servant of God, is not a matter of favour or reward, but an abiding and permanent result of the soul's own striving, an asset, which can never be taken away, a treasure indeed, which "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt," and "which thieves cannot break through nor steal." The proof of this has to be given, not to the writer, nor to God, but to the cynical and disbelieving world. A proof of the *bona fides* of goodness is to be given to show that all cynicism here is unworthy. Men were bidden to look around for themselves, and see, and they are assured, that if they do this with open eye and honest heart, they will find abundant instances on every hand of really good men, who are and remain good, in spite of the most unfavourable conditions in life. They will see good men, like Lazarus, lying in poverty and sores, wholly without any earthly good thing, men of whom the world is not worthy.

Upon such a truly good man, every kind of loss and suffering is to be sent, and it is sent, and that all of a sudden, in blow after blow, most severely.

The first loss, that of property, and outward possessions, is borne in a brave and uncomplaining manner. Hence a second, and even more acute suffering is called for, that no manner of doubt as to the severity of the test might linger. Bodily disease in its worst form is supposed to come upon this good man, so that men might hide, as it were, their faces from him. In such a case, what will the sufferer do now? Will he not curse God, and die? In such circumstances will faith survive at all? Amid the loss of everything held dear, and in keenest pain, will virtue remain? It is the triumphant conviction of the writer that it will, that neither faith, nor virtue will be in any way affected. This he sees with unerring vision, that suffering will only bring goodness into clearer relief, and make manifest to all, that it is wholly independent of, and superior to, all outward things, and all extraneous considerations. The man, who does a kind or noble action does it for the sake of what goodness accomplishes by its own inherent nature and essential working, among men; it is not a something for something, a *quid pro quo*, but a real good. There is here no *arrière pensée*, no cold calculation of consequences, but a brave doing, springing out of a firm conviction as to what is right. Such a view has been associated with Stoicism, and finds splendid illustrations in the writings of such a high and noble soul as Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus.

Thus our writer would condemn the opinion held by many then, and not altogether given up

by some even yet, that goodness depends on favourable circumstances or hope of reward, while badness results from those of an opposite kind. Emphasis has been unduly laid upon the influence of lot on character, and justice has not always been done to the much greater influence of character on lot. It is admitted, of course, that the material in and on which mind and character have to work, must have a modifying and limiting force upon all endeavour even as

Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement,

but mind and character are the creative and formative forces at work, and even though they have to meet the most stubborn and apparently intractable material, they leave their own impress on all they touch, in the changing course of things. Matter in the long run yields to spirit, and what is outward, likewise, to the inner force, that shapes and forms. The potter, though often hindered and disappointed, perseveres, and at the last will make the vessel that he wants to present, as his finished triumph.

Aye, note that potter's wheel,

That metaphor! and feel

Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay.

Well might Froude dwell on the grandeur of the solution, that is here given in the Prologue, so far as it settles for ever this supreme truth that goodness of character belongs to a realm, wholly

uninfluenced by rewards or punishments, and so remains altogether above all question of gain or loss, and all those considerations, that weigh so heavily with the commercial spirit. But when it is alleged that this contribution is the solution, which Christianity supplies, there is a failure to understand what that solution is, and an undue exaggeration of the worth of what the Prologue teaches.

It has, indeed, a great value, and that specially appears, when we look at it in the light of its bearing on, and application to, the conditions of the time, when it was written. It had a distinct message to the writer's people then, a message of comfort. To them he would say, You are God's servant; you are good; and your cause is good. These sad sufferings which have fallen upon you do not in any way alter or affect these great matters. Your true position did not depend on anything outward. If then many outward things have been lost, there is really no essential change. True, your beautiful Temple is gone, for it is burned up with fire. You are in sad captivity, and sore bondage; and your sufferings are intense. But you are still God's servant.

No attempt is made in any way to underestimate all this; on the contrary, the extreme nature of it is fully admitted, but this is pointed out, that the people still had that, in which their true life always consisted, and without which there is no worthy living. Their goodness, which is the true asset of their

soul, remains; in spite of all that seems to say the opposite, they are still the recognised servants of God. And he would urge this, Do not take this view, which your adversaries are adopting, that what has befallen you is a proof of the anger of God, a judgment or visitation because of some special sin. It is a warfare in which you are engaged, a vocation to which you are called. "Fear not, neither be ye afraid." These sufferings must not be explained in connection with your character. You must not imagine for one moment that God has forsaken you, or ceased to be gracious. Never mind what other nations are saying; they do not know the real significance of the situation. Only cleave close to your God. Pass through the time of suffering, with a brave and heroic spirit, unmoved and unmurmuring, and so prove to the world the essential and permanent nature of your goodness, that it is not as "the morning cloud, or as the dew, that early passeth away." Prove this clearly that all cynicism, negative criticism, and unworthy suspicion concerning you, have no ground at all. Let men see that Israel does "serve God for nought." Goodness, as a great moral and spiritual concern of God, having been called in question, is now being thus put to the test in your case. Let the test be successful, for upon it much depends. Out of this testing furnace, which seems to have been seven-fold heated, emerge in a victorious and triumphant manner, wholly unharmed, and with your convictions and enthusiasms in no

way diminished, but in every way rather deepened and strengthened.

Thus would we see the value of the teaching of the Prologue in its historical relations. And yet we must not ignore the defects of such teaching. For it does not seem to grapple very closely with the reason or nature of suffering, and it does not supply us with any very deep or satisfying explanation of it, in relation to God, or after all in relation to its worth and meaning in human life. Suffering here seems to stand outside of the moral and personal region of the soul, and so to have in itself no moral worth, at least so far as the individual who suffers is concerned. It is not needed by him; it serves a purpose not for him, but in the general economy of things. It comes in the changing vicissitudes of time, as of sovereign necessity, and should give man no concern. Again, it is worthy of note that here suffering is not viewed as coming from God directly, but as being allowed by Him, and that almost most unwillingly. It is supposed to come at the suggestion of the Adversary, or the Satan, who, however, is the executive of God for this purpose. And, of course, all things are God's servants.

What is of importance for us to notice, and emphasise clearly is that there is a certain superficiality and externality of view here, and an ignoring altogether of the moral worth and meaning of the sufferings of life. We feel that there are depths yet to be explored, so that we cannot join with Froude in asking, "Where can we find

a grander solution?" Certainly it is far from being complete. There is an advance upon it in the teaching of Isaiah (chap. liii.), which contains a great anticipation and foreshadowing of the Christian solution; there we are taught that the servant of God suffers for others. Thus in his suffering there is a supreme moral element. By it some spiritual progress is made in him, just because it is being made in others; his travail is their good and his joy indeed. Thus suffering becomes far more than a test, or public demonstration of the enduring character of goodness; it is being recognised as a means of being made perfect.

The Prologue does not impress us with the truth that some valuable purpose is being served by suffering, for this thought is not there. The outward world is not the school of the best and purest. We must enter more deeply into the precincts of the human soul. These were, however, days of lesser light, and poorer revelation; the true light was yet to shine in greater and fuller effulgence. And when Christ came the world was to be taught, not simply the superiority of goodness to suffering, but much more the splendid truth, that in and by suffering the highest ends of man's well being were to be attained.

CHAPTER III

THE SPEECHES OF THE THREE FRIENDS, OR SUFFERING VIEWED AS THE DIVINE PUNISH- MENT OF SIN

WE now pass from the supreme and exalted heights of the heavenly Councils, with all their calmness of highest thought, and touch the lower, nay the lowest depths of our too solid earth, with all its unrest, and throbbing emotion. As Moses descended from the Mount of holy communings only to meet an extremely trying situation, or Christ and the chosen Three came down from highest vision only to face human sorrow in one of its acutest forms, so now we pass from the region of the heavenly, with all its bliss, and harmony, and at once are confronted and arrested by the saddest of all pictures, a man in the most wretched of all conditions, conscious of the loss of all his earthly belongings, and suffering from the most acute form of disease. He who had been introduced to us in the Prologue as in the happiest of outward circumstances, now lies before us as a most pathetic figure, cursing the day of his birth and wishing, like many another sufferer, in similar cases, that he had never been born, or

seen the light. And as we gaze, we are constrained to ask the great question, Why is there sorrow like unto this sorrow? Here the human sufferer lies, in the language of those days as "one stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, as one from whom men hid their faces." To them it seemed as if all this trouble only proved that this man had sinned above all, that were his contemporaries, and was a God-forsaken man, just because he had been a God-forsaking one. All sickness and disease were then a direct "visitation of heaven." This had been the explanation of other days, but it was now being shown to be obsolete, and unserviceable. "Job" on his heap of ashes, with distraught countenance, and his bitter cry, is a demand for a better and truer interpretation of life, than had yet been given.

The opening protest is full of the most intense pathos; all the elements of human tragedy are here present in their most pronounced and aggravated forms. And as we look in tenderest pity, we hear words that seem to contain severest indictment of life, as it is constituted, but when more closely studied, only of that life on a certain interpretation of it. Let us not see here, as some have done, a denial of the moral order of the Universe, nor any indictment of the most High. Doubtless, the sufferer here indicts an unjust, ruthless, merely almighty being, but this is not God in any true sense;—such a God, in Nietzsche's words, is dead, nay, better, such a God has never lived. The invective here is not against life as it

is. It was a heart-rending experience through which the sufferer was passing, and "the weight of" what seemed "this unintelligible world" pressed in upon him just then. We are reminded of Jeremiah's words, in which under a deep sense of disappointment at the way in which he was being treated by his own countrymen, he, too, cursed the day of his birth, and gave expression to those deep convictions of his about the sufferings of the servant of God, which afterwards found such sublime statement in the words of Isaiah, to which we have already referred.

The actual facts of life are here set before us, as they arrested the awaking intellect, and compelled thought to be focused on reality. The striking scene, brought before us now, supplies an opportunity for the spirit of criticism, as it calls life in its hidden meanings and worth to the bar of a supreme tribunal, and insists that all its inner significance shall be unfolded, and no longer kept in Sphynx-like seclusion, no longer regarded as a mystery, too sacred for the mind of man to grasp, and understand. And in all this there is nothing, surely, inconsistent with the true spirit of piety and religion. For while submission and surrender of heart and mind, a high reverence, indeed, enter into such experiences of the soul, there is rightly felt the necessity that that, to which the submission or surrender is made, should be the object of knowledge in a clear and distinct way. Thus doubts, protests, even this extreme form of cursing the day of one's birth, here adopted by way of

emphasis, indicate a healthy movement of man's soul towards a fuller light. At the back of them all, let us see a deep faith struggling for a worthier expression of itself. A denunciation of the present is but a great cry for a better future, with a holy confidence that it will bring the longed-for light in greater fulness, for as the poet has it,

But what am I?
An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language, but a cry?

words so tender, and so true only completed by added words like these,

And crying, knows his father nigh.

The sincere perplexities of honest minds are the assurance that the solution, which they need, is one that is sure to be attained by them.

In the great protest, as we have said, we are reminded of almost similar words, used by Jeremiah, which are manifestly earlier, and probably the basis on which this more regular form of cursing is built up. Many were saying, "Who will show us any good?" as they were losing all interest in life, and their mind was being overclouded, "My way," said some, "is hid from the LORD, and my cause is passed from my God."

As "Job" lies before us, as the symbol of fallen human greatness, so did old Priam of Troy appear to Homer. The Greek tragedian makes one of his heroes, in the crisis of his life, say,

It were better never to have been born.

And Faust, that great type of much of our modern humanity, cries,

O that I never had been born !

In Tennyson's "Two Voices," doubtless influenced by this Book of Job, we have these words at the beginning,

Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be ?

Burning words have ever burst forth from the lips of men in trouble, as in a moment of despair. They are as those to whom this thought suggests itself in the poet's words,—

Could we but
Grasp this sorry scheme of things, entire,
Would we not shatter it in bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire ?

Yes, "Job" like all real sufferers, is made to speak with great intensity of emotion. For truly nothing is worthy of attention, except that which is written, as it were in the heart's blood. But it is not life itself after all, with which they are at war; it is really with a wrong view of it. For surely this is true, that no one who knows what life is, in all its inner meaning, and in all the worth it may have, has ever wished that he had never been born, or that he might die.

Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath,
Has ever truly longed for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death for which we pant,
More life and fuller, that I want.

But suffering by itself, in its first onslaught, with its suddenness and its completeness, stuns men for the time. They wist not what to say, for sorrow blinds their eyes, and blurs their vision. It seems all so mysterious, and difficult to be understood. The heart is apt to be at once rebellious, and to raise a loud, and altogether unreasoned, if not unreasoning, protest. A veritable storm of fume and rage is created. If no true explanation speedily comes, and sorrow cannot be surmounted soon, life may be robbed of its worth, and all religion threatened at its very centre. This is the danger that is very clearly seen by the author, and against which he is eager and ready to guard. It is just because he knows that suffering raises a protest in the human breast, that he makes his hero speak so strongly, although he is a man wholly blameless. For if such a one can so speak, then here are conditions, which require careful and immediate treatment. Suffering not understood, wrongly explained, or misinterpreted may so completely overwhelm a man, as to destroy not only all his belief in the wise government of the world, but also in God Himself.

In Jeremiah's case, as in that of Elijah, and in that of all who know God, the protest is only a passing phase, a sudden momentary outburst of strong feeling. But with others, who know not

God, it may become a permanent attitude, a mental obsession, and a darkening, blighting experience. Such a good man as "Job" has this passing experience, and thus an aim of the highest importance is held in view, and successfully accomplished. What requires to be done is to bring a true explanation, that may, if possible, satisfy the sorely tried sufferer, so that he may abandon his grief, and be braced up for a true and worthy discharge of his duty and calling in life. To this the best wisdom of the time is called into requisition by the writer, and this is voiced by the three Friends.

Eliphaz, as their chief spokesman, and worthiest representative, enters in a kindly and sympathetic way on the duty, to which he is called, in his friend's distress. He voices a true instinct of the soul, when he declares that he cannot stand aloof, or silent in the presence of such agony and pain. He knows how religion had always been the stay and comfort of men in trouble, and that those who are complaining now were once calm, and able to comfort others, and he asks in amazement, How is it that the old piety does not afford comfort now? Is it not clear that the good have always been divinely protected in their going out and in their coming in, and that it is only the wicked who suffer? By vision and revelation, it had already been taught to men, that in this transitory life suffering dogs the steps of the bad, while deliverance comes to the righteous. And while, for the moment, he gives expression to the view, that

suffering is a means of chastisement, he passes on to his main contention, that the good man will be wonderfully shielded from danger, having his house secure, his family prosperous, and his life crowned with an honoured old age. It is not his purpose here, however, to dwell on the teaching that suffering is disciplinary; this becomes the view of another, and a later day, finding fullest voice in the speeches of "Elihu."

But when Eliphaz, even in the kindest manner, dwells upon the doctrine that good men do not suffer, he puts himself in opposition to the known facts of life, and to the very conditions of the case before him, for as we have seen, it is the supposition of the book that here we have a righteous man suffering.

And this is the situation which is now set forth, as one calling not for generalities, and some kind of vague sympathy, but for some definite, and detailed treatment of life, in which a very real and genuine sympathy may lead to a united effort to find out some valid solution. For, as a matter of fact, a good man does suffer. To say that he does not, is only to shut one's eyes to the patent and obvious circumstances of experience, and almost cruelly to increase the pain of a sufferer, and to evade the pressing question of the moment.

An attitude of evasion, or any kind of want of sympathy only does harm. It makes the sufferer feel that he stands alone, it intensifies his agony, and leads him to magnify his difficulty. He must not be allowed to feel or think thus, in the great

struggle of his soul. The claim that is made for kindly and helpful consideration is one that must be attended to by a wise friend.

Here we are made to feel that in the opinion of the writer, many advocates of old and accepted views often fail, not from intention, perhaps, but from want of thought. Their wrong or imperfect views render them helpless in human need.

They alone
Can feel for mourners, who themselves have mourned.

It is therefore necessary to emphasise the actual case, which requires attention now. An appeal is made to the deepest feelings of the heart, as the troubles and sicknesses of man in this, so short and transitory, life are dwelt upon, and so graphically described. As the sense deepens that all these are so wholly undeserved, and far too heavy to be borne, and as the view that suffering only comes to the wicked is pressed home, the righteous servant of God is led on to a stronger spirit of protest, which makes him not only protest against a theory of things, but to argue now so eagerly, that if the Friends are correct in their views of God, then there is more wrong than a theory, and that God Himself must be wrong. Thus the un-wisdom of the Friends in their method of treatment brings it about, that the attack seems to be levelled against God Himself, a result that, at all hazards, should always be avoided.

The suggestion that man is so little and insignificant, is used in this way. If life has no moral

meaning, no significance or lasting worth, then why should God mind, or in any way take knowledge of man, either to protect or punish him? Could He not ignore him altogether, and thus leave him alone?

When Bildad speaks, it is manifest that the defenders of the old views are feeling sore; for not only their doctrines, but they themselves are being attacked. It is felt by them that the suggestion, that there is no meaning in suffering, and no necessity for it, is altogether unworthy and a calling in question of the divine supremacy, and the perfect wisdom of God. A righteous God, they hold, must punish sin by means of suffering, and for no other reason could He send suffering, so that in a very simple way the presence of suffering in the world is accounted for.

But "Job" does not in any way call in question either the divine supremacy or the divine wisdom. These truths are by him fully recognised. What does concern him now is this pressing question, Why do both good and bad suffer? If only the bad suffered, then there would be no question at all, but the good suffer! If there are no moral distinctions with God, of what use would any appeal be, if made to Him? On the basis of accepted views, there seems no way of understanding Him, no way of getting near to Him. There is no middleman, or interpreter, who in some worthy manner could give mankind a true explanation of life's actual facts.

Yet to God, in some way, man must draw near;

the way to God must lie open somehow for man. The true God, Who made man, and knows his nature, must surely discern his deepest thoughts, and purest aspirations. Assuredly He must enter sympathetically into his case. For if He does not, then life would be wholly vain, and nought of joy or comfort could ever come into the human heart.

In Sophocles even, we are taught that, “compassion shares the throne of Zeus.”

This, however, is to assert that man can have some satisfying knowledge of God, and some understanding of His ways, but according to Zophar, and those who think with him, this thought must not be for a moment maintained, for God is unknown, and all His ways transcend the possibility of being known by man. But to hold this view with any measure of consistency would mean that we would have to give up not only “Job’s” views, but all views about God altogether, and on this theory of man’s incapacity to know God a system of Agnosticism would be fully justified. The Friends, however, have their doctrine that suffering is the punishment sent by God upon the evil-doer. If man is debarred from knowing God, how does he know this? And if he is entitled to hold this view, why may he not by the same process of reasoning, which led him so far, go on to another, even a better and a higher view?

Thus some knowledge of God lies behind every view which men form of the moral order of the Universe, and the question is as to the best that

they should form. Hence with "Job," we ask, With our knowledge of God, are we warranted in holding the view that suffering is the punishment of sin? Is it a worthy view of God, that is here implied? Is God to be regarded as a grand inquisitor, keeping watch over man and noting his faults? Have we not altogether surpassed the old ideas that just as men had passions of anger, so the gods have?

Even if the great God has a real and living interest in man, is it not possible to think that He may aim at something higher than punishment? May not suffering be a test, or have in itself something of a remedial sort? Nay, may it not be borne by the good, for some high or lofty end, that goes far beyond themselves, and finds in the good of others its highest justification?

The old view that suffering is punishment, resulting from the anger of God, might lead, did lead, to a very morbid searching of heart, to see if there were any such sin, as would warrant severe pain. What was the sin, *e.g.*,—which accounted for the Captivity? What sin was it that brought about the dearth in Jeremiah's time? Would the absence of some particular sin have saved the people from that, or any similar suffering? If a man holds this view, that God in anger inflicts suffering as punishment, he may be wrongly moved, and sent on false lines of inquiry as to his own life.

Here "Job" is pressed to look for sin in his own life, for that, which, *ex hypothesi*, does not exist.

In this way clearly the contention of the Friends breaks down.

The appeal made to tradition, and to what the fathers have taught in support of this view is also valueless, for really the worth of tradition lies in this, that it commands itself to those that adopt it, and is thus the expression of their own belief. To quote from Goethe,

The ages that are past
Are now a book with seven seals protected.
What you the spirit of the ages call,
Is nothing but the spirit of you all.

A kind of authority is sought for in an appeal to tradition, but after all it is to their own view of it all, that appeal is made.

A modern writer says, "We must not forget that it is Authority rather than reason to which in the main, we owe not religion only, but ethics, and politics," and he finds man's glory not in reason but "in our capacity for influencing, and being influenced through the action of Authority."

But truly "Tradition has its value when it is taken up and made to live again in the individual's thought, and will." To accept it otherwise is "to bind reason in chains at the feet of tradition," and so "to enslave it to its own past."

It is very interesting to notice how the writer lays emphasis on the knowledge of what is around, and how he would in a true Baconian spirit bring us into touch with the obvious facts of life. As the palate can judge of the food presented, so

reason can come to wise decisions on what is observed. All nature can teach those, who are willing to learn. From the beasts, birds, and fishes, great lessons can be gathered. Through them a living God is ever revealing Himself, and the open eye can lead men to a truer interpretation of God and His ways, than any appeal to tradition, or to the speculations of men. Thus "Job" protests that he too can speak of God in a worthy manner. He knows as well as they, both about himself and about God. The question is not concerning the competency of the persons, for he is not inferior to them, but about the correctness of their observations, and the rightness of their conclusions. Those of the Friends are imperfect and inadequate; they do not take in all the facts.

It is clear that bad men are made to suffer, when they are caught and punished, but it has not been fully recognised, and so not at all explained why good men suffer, and also why many bad men do not suffer at all. The consciousness of goodness, and the fact of suffering have to be related in a complete knowledge, in which no element that is relevant is, in any way, ignored.

"Job" is fully resolved to maintain his integrity, and to state his case before God. What seems the audacity of such an attitude is only justified by the truth, on which it is based.

Now what we find in the oft-repeated sayings of the Friends is what is embodied in the countless maxims, in which the "Wisdom" writers set forth

their view of life, many of which are collected and remain for us in the Book of Proverbs. Similar views of life, are to be found in the Book of Deuteronomy, as also in the great Iliad of Homer, and in the earliest Greek poetry, like that of Hesiod, and Pindar.

Some quotations may be given from the Proverbs and the early Psalms. In Prov. xi. 31, we read :—

Behold ! the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth :
Much more the wicked, and the sinner.

Again in Prov. xxii. 4 :—

By humility, and the Fear of God,
Are riches, and honour, and life.

Or to quote from the Psalms, we have in Psa. xxxvii. 2, 9 :—

The workers of iniquity
Shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.
But those that wait upon the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.

We may also quote from the Iliad, to the same effect. “God looks down upon the children of men, and punishes the doer of wrong. Short lived are those that contend with the immortal gods.” “God sends the storm, and the earthquake, and the tempest, as the executors of His vengeance.” Ajax was dashed to pieces on the rocks, for defying the gods, and Ulysses

suffered nine years for a hasty word. The gods were supposed to help those, who paid them proper attention, giving their favour and reward to those who served them well, but sending speedy punishment on those who were disobedient to their behests. Thus was Prometheus bound to the rock, because he had ventured to call in question the actions of Zeus, the supreme god. As Plato says, "For, throwing in the approbation of the gods, they have unspeakable blessings to enumerate for holy men, which, they say, the gods bestow." The "they" here are the generous Hesiod and Homer.

In such ways, and in such maxims had the simple, primitive faith of men found expression. Even as in a well-ordered State, protection and reward were given to those, who obeyed the laws, and punishment speedily meted out to those, who broke them, so in the government of the world, viewed as only a State on a large scale, the same principles ruled. The supreme God was simply conceived as a great king, nay, as indeed an arbitrary despot. Physical, material, or outward attributes were magnified. There was in all this much of an external way of looking at things; power and majesty, rather than any spiritual qualities, like love or grace, were alone thought of. All was based on an outward view of life, rather than on the moral, and spiritual significance of experience.

These old ways of looking at life, although so imperfect, had yet some deep truth in them, whereby they had acceptance, and continued so long to

sway men's minds. There is an essential connection between goodness and happiness, and between evil and punishment. But this connection does not lie on the surface, and ever requires careful and adequate treatment. If stated baldly this connection appears only as a half truth; and like all half truths can only do immense harm, just because it contains a certain amount of truth, and not the whole. An incomplete induction, which ignores much, supplies only a partial view of things.

On such a view, God had been conceived as acting in a direct and immediate way on life, and all second causes were ignored. Everything was traced to the acting of God directly, and He was in this way thought of as constantly interfering or interposing. A better conception of the Universe was gradually being reached, and in that process "Job's" contendings have an important place.

In the same way, a doctrine of rewards and punishments, which may in some abstract way be true, had been seen as ruling in the concrete affairs of men, and in such an application found not to be working at all clearly. Continual exceptions were ever more and more being discovered. Thus any undue pressing of abstract or generalised maxims, which can only be received with qualification, only did much harm, and did not in any way at all advance the cause of truth, but hindered it rather. The half truths of the Friends became a tyranny and a snare, and against them "Job" rightly raised his loud complaint.

It is interesting in such a book as that of Exodus, to trace the way, in which the idea of God as sender of plagues, a God of retribution, is being gradually replaced by a better thought of Him, as a God that is "merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." In anthropomorphic language God is said to be angry, and to repent, but here we see man at first attributing his own feelings to God, and only at last rising to a true idea of what God in His unchanging and unalterable nature is from age to age.

Through the speeches of "Job," we learn that to trace suffering to God as a punishment of sin is only to perpetuate an untrue conception of Him. To do this would be to rob man of all the consolation, which religion is fitted to supply, when God is more worthily conceived.

This great defect we also notice in the passing, for it will receive fuller treatment farther on, that man's actions are viewed separately, and not in their relations to one another, as parts of one whole. When taken in their isolation the events of life also have a far different appearance from what they have, when viewed as belonging to a great plan, in the process of unfolding.

Not only, however, do the righteous suffer, and so the view of the Friends fails, but the wicked prosper. And this gives point to the complaint of Habakkuk, and such Psalms as the xvii., xlix., and lxxiii., all which seek for a solution, and give an explanation not given by the Friends.

When this complaint is felt, then as the poet says,

Griefs and graves make men cry out
Against the heavens.

The famous "In Memoriam," of Tennyson gives us a modern and touching treatment of suffering, for it was written under what was to him a terrible blow. His had been an irretrievable loss, he felt, when he lost that friend, to whom there could be no second friend. And round the thought of that great sorrow he has gathered some of the most beautiful and striking reflections upon life, and its deepest meanings. He tells us how only the sufferer himself can realise the weight of sorrow, and from his own true, deep experience give any adequate, or satisfying explanation of what it means, first of all to himself, and then to others. With the old Greek poet he could say,

"Tis easy for the man, whose foot is placed
Outside calamities, to urge advice
On him, who struggles in the toils.

Only from within these toils can any true help come. Only from within the circle and fellowship of suffering can any word be spoken, that can comfort the broken heart, or make man strong to meet the pressing duties of life. It is here that the failure of the Friends is most apparent. They view suffering from the outside, and not as fellow-sufferers, and therefore they are not able to give

what is asked. They do not stand in the sufferer's room and place, and so prove themselves incapable of the human note of genuine sympathy. The sympathetic Friend, and Brother is One, that has a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, and is tried in all points as we are. And sorrow, rightly borne, makes us wise indeed.

Thus so far as we have gone in our consideration of this book, this, at least, is clear, that there is very much more in suffering, both of worth, and meaning, than can be explained by the old, external, and superficial view championed by the three Friends, that it is the punishment of sin. If it is that, and we shall find this true, that all violations of the laws of God are followed by pain, it is very much more than that in truth, for we shall see that there are sufferings, which the best and holiest of men suffer, and that by no mere outside constraint, but by their own brave, and heroic resolution.

It is something of highest value to have the glowing words of "Job" in loud protest against a view of suffering so partial and incomplete, as that taken by the Friends. By such means we are being led on step by step to a view that will be more worthy of a Universe in which God rules, and more in harmony with the deep moral meaning and significance of life.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPEECHES CONTINUED—THE VIEW THAT
THE SUFFERINGS OF THE GOOD ARE SHORT-
LIVED, AS IS THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED

IN glowing and burning words “Job” presses home his absolute conviction, as we have seen, that the theory of the Friends is wholly inadequate, and the deep interest in the movement of the poem now increases. The struggle is felt to be vital, and one of life and death. No superficial question is at issue, for the very heart and centre of things is being touched. The tone of the Friends becomes more bitter, and they are more pronounced in their attack on one, who utters such a demand, as “Job” does now, and who refuses to shelter himself under the old roof-tree of former views.

In the same way “Job,” too, becomes more aggressive in the protestations of his own innocence, and in his denunciation of his old Friends. He now makes his appeal go past them, and addresses it to God Himself. He feels it to be “a small matter to be judged of man’s judgment.” But when they charge him with irreverence and

the abandonment of religion, they only show that they have lost touch with the sufferer, and are now wholly unable to give him any help. When men are earnest inquirers, it is always a mistake to level charges of this kind at them. A convinced upholder of the view attacked may deem the words of question or attack irreverent, but he ought to feel also, that perhaps his presentation of the truth may have created this apparent irreverence, and that truest reverence can alone come from full and true knowledge, which gives its own real satisfaction. For if knowledge grows from more to more, then certainly more of reverence will in us dwell.

When the Prophet Samuel failed to see that Israel's demand for a king was occasioned by the inefficiency of his sons, he regarded a rejection of them, as a rejection of God.

Too often the claim for more reverence has been accompanied by the refusal to allow more knowledge, and only with evil results.

The pessimistic and despairing writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes, declared that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Not unseldom has the ban been put on fuller inquiry by those, who dread for themselves the suffering that may be involved for them in a fuller surrender to truth, by the giving up of views, easily and early accepted, for they had perhaps no struggle of soul to receive these, and even though these supply no complete satisfaction, they still hold on to them. The struggle of soul shown by the intense words

of "Job," required a corresponding struggle of soul on the part of his Friends, and this was wholly wanting.

The incompleteness of the main contention of the Friends is shown by the way in which other and supplementary views are required, as it were only in the passing, and suggested, but not fully worked out as definite opinions. Already Eliphaz had noted that suffering was disciplinary, and that also in man, who was mortal, and therefore weak, suffering was a necessary element. If either of these views were true, then it was not true that suffering was a punishment. To admit these considerations would have meant that the Friends were on the way to a new and better view. But for this they were not yet ready. The first view falls to receive treatment by and by, but the second opinion may here be briefly adverted to.

If fault is always found in the creature, just because of creaturehood, and if suffering ever goes along with it, then of course, suffering is not penal or retributive. It is bound up with human nature and all must suffer. Hence it is said to all,

Nor must you hope exemption. To be mortal
Is to be plied with trials manifold.

Such is our mortal lot, and protest against suffering would therefore be folly. It comes to all in the nature of things, and has no moral value, and serves no purpose; it is just there, and has to

be met as Marcus Aurelius eloquently reminds us, as something prescribed by nature. Such a view was enshrined in ancient Buddhism, and is to be found in modern forms of pessimism. Evil, and wretchedness, they say, inhere essentially in our human nature, as by its very constitution. To some sages this is so, because matter is sinful, and thus the body is as a prison-house, in which man's spirit is fettered as long as he lives. In all striving, therefore, pain is always present. Life is suffering. The very "will to be," involves a ceaseless sorrow. Hence the great Gautama urged on all his followers, as the way of wisdom, that they should renounce all that caused pain, and especially cease from desire, so passing into the calm and bliss of Nirvāna. Such a view is inconsistent with a true view of personality, and with the moral meaning of life.

It destroys all effort, and is closely associated with a false dualism of our nature, which sees good in the spirit only, and evil, and that continually, in the body. From such a view of man there have sprung various forms of asceticism in history.

But, as we have said, the Friends did not accept either of these views, but holding that suffering followed sin, they were obliged to impute sin to "Job." This makes the situation very acute, and it brings us up to the most intense moment of the work, with its most magnificent declaration of belief, that soon would come a perfect vindication for the sufferer. Man seems to be extremely

hostile. Every word spoken only seems to increase the antagonisms around. But the more the mind is met by all this blank amazement and want of sympathy, the stronger it seems to grow in itself, and in its great hope to find its satisfaction in rising beyond every earthly thing, soaring lark-like up to heaven's gate, and in feeling that in a firmer grasp, and in a clearer vision of God and truth, it will obtain all it needs. However opposed at any time men may be, as they stand up in defence of their time-made fortresses, the earnest soul is assured that it will find God sympathetic, as it draws nearer to Him. And after all, His thoughts are not as ours. New forms and categories of thought are demanded by advancing inquiry. Each fact of the new experience has to be examined in the light it brings with itself. It has been remarked that "we reflect too often in general not to find the facts, but to prove our theories at the expense of them." "Job" now seems to stand at bay, with his back to the wall, all alone, feeling as did Elijah, or another Athanasius, against the whole world.

In answer to Bildad, who adheres to the thesis, that in the order of the Universe the good are prosperous, and the wicked are punished, it is only necessary to show how entirely different from that is the real state of things in the world, as any unbiassed observer could see.

But conscious that he was only speaking to deaf or unwilling ears, he feels himself called upon

to make what is his most splendid, and really final protest. Now in sublime eloquence his spirit reaches its highest level. The man, who has been feeling after God, now seems to find Him. He is assured that, what concerns his truest self, also concerns God. A deep identity exists between God and the human spirit here, in this common interest in the vindicating of what is right and true. And thus the last and great appeal, and the supreme protest is made. To God! Yes, for as Carlyle in his own striking way tells us, the sufferer, whether in Israel among the captives of Babylon, or in France with the Huguenots, appeals not to man, nor to posterity—"no, a thousand times, no, but to the Eternal God." "We name the great over-reason Beneficence," and we that are "the children of Beneficence" press close to Him, as mind seeks mind, and heart seeks heart, so sure that even at the very centre of all things, even of the storm, "a heart beats here." And this God, man can trust in, as most wonderfully kind, even though he may not be able to put it all, as yet, into words. Whatever God is, He is on the side of the best the human mind can reach or think. The instinct of the soul can never here go wrong. Even if forsaken by nearest relative, or dearest friend, the spirit conscious of its own integrity, as *mens conscientia recti*, has a safe resort, and resting there can with perfect calmness view the issue. For God is on his side, and he need not fear. What can man do unto him? The innocent one must have

his vindication. It may be long delayed, nay, it may not come before his death in any public or outward form, but come it must, for he has it already as the earnest in his own inner experience. That can never betray him.

Here the writer makes use of a well-known custom in ancient Israel, for the purpose of emphasis now. It is that of the *Goel*, next of kin, whose duty it was to stand up in the most public manner, on behalf of his friend, who had been killed, or in any way unjustly treated. Immediately on his death, the *Goel* had to appear and to secure a complete vindication for his relative. So "Job" feels, nay, knows that he too, has his *Goel*, who will yet perfectly vindicate his name. Assured of this, he is anxious to have an indelible record made in the rock, as a witness of what he is now so strongly asserting, that is, his absolute integrity. While he lives, he may have no one to stand up for him, but what of that? None of his own generation, none of his contemporaries, might stand in his defence, or understand his contending, nay, he might be persecuted by them, and even done to death. But yet the time would come, when not only in God's sight, for this he is sure was already accomplished, but in the sight of all men, the vindication would be complete. Thus one generation persecutes the prophets, and the next builds sepulchres in their honour. The great, like the good man, does not trim his sails according to the breezes of the moment, and yet he has the full assurance that

the verdict of humanity will in the long run be in his favour. Too much, however, has the doctrine of rewards and punishment "insinuated itself into the basis of things," that it is not easy for a superficial observer to surmount it at all. Of course, it is not for the sake of the vindication or ultimate recognition, that man is either good or great, but under the constraint of truth itself, and for its own sake.

Our view of the passage does not require the actual interposition either of God, or of any one specially raised up. The emphasis is on the thought of certain vindication, and not essentially on the method of it. The Goel custom is here a fitting illustration of this important truth, that the wrongness of the present, or of any imperfect view must be soon exposed, and the opponent of it finally acclaimed as right after all.

In passing we may remark on the eager Rabbinic exegesis, so readily taken over by the early Christian apologists. This was quite natural in their circumstances, as they had to commend the new teaching to the Jews, if possible. In every part of the Old Testament some testimony, or forecasting of the Messiah was found, and that, in many cases, by a complete ignoring of the first and historical meaning. This resulted in an almost mechanical, and wholly unspiritual treatment of several passages, each of which in their true significance had some contribution to make to the development of truth. It is important, then, in the interest not only of correct inter-

pretation, but also, nay, much more of the truth to be defended, that no later views be read into such a great passage as this or any other in Scripture.

The particular translation of our passage here, and the splendid music of Handel's "Messiah" set to these sublime words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," have given rise to very many hallowed associations, as they are used in our most solemn services. Hence there is an unwillingness to look at the words in their first meaning, fearing to face what would seem to be a loss.

But loss there could not be, nay truly, we think, there would be much gain. For faith in Christ is not established by such a passage as we are looking at now. That faith is based on what Christ actually did, and on what He has accomplished for the world, and in the experience of those, who have come to Him, with trustful hearts.

Our text with many other places in "Job" has suffered very much corruption in the course of tradition, and largely because its first meaning has been passed over. A passage, throbbing with a sublime confidence, and indicating a source of high consolation, has been used in connection with, nay, in proof of, a truth as yet undreamed of, and with this great doctrine of redemption in Christ in such a way that that doctrine has been in a measure weakened. Sure and free from all doubt must be a foundation, on which such a

high truth rests. The truth, here, does not need any doubtful support.

A very valuable reconstruction of the Hebrew text has been given by a great Old Testament scholar, and we have tried to translate his arrangement. In that way of reading, we see how the sufferer emphasises his trust. For in the future, even when he is dead and out of his body, he sees his vindication sure. God, he knows, is now on his side, but that, all will then see too. So that in this way, all doubt will have been caused to disappear as to the goodness of the character of the sufferer.

If all that has sometimes been read into this great passage had been really there, the drama might have easily at this point been brought to a conclusion, but, obviously, it does not carry those concerned very far beyond seeing here a very much more pronounced protestation of innocence on "Job's" part, which makes them more disappointed with him than ever. Zophar is clearly very angry, and only pours contempt on what has just been so earnestly and splendidly said.

But it is the writer's aim to show that certainly an impression has been made on the Friends, so that they come to see how impossible it is any longer to hold the old view in all its fulness. They take up the contention that the wicked do not suffer, while the good do, and they look at it more sympathetically. It seems to deserve attention at their hands. Instead of the bad being punished, on the contrary they seem to be wonderfully free

from suffering. A new ground, therefore, is taken up, and this view finds expression, that if the wicked are thus free, it is only for a short time. Here, then, as in Psalm xxxvii. 13, it is declared that the day of doom is fast approaching. Prosperity is only temporary, and "the arms of the wicked shall be broken." Evildoers shall be cut off. "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be."

I have seen the wicked in great power
And spreading himself, like a green bay-tree.
I passed by, and, lo ! he was not !
I sought him, and he could not be found !

Likewise, in Psalm lxxiii., the prosperity of the wicked is recognised as a fact of life, so that men are envious, and even call in question the possibility of God knowing anything about such a condition of affairs. For this seems so entirely at variance with His moral government of the Universe. But the Psalmist solves the difficulty, by what he regards as a thought given him by God, even this, that the wicked are set in slippery places, and that soon they will be overwhelmed with destruction, as in a moment. "For lo ! they that are far from Thee shall perish."

Thus, too, Habakkuk had stood on his watch-tower, and had clearly seen, that though the wicked seem to triumph with loud boastings, this is only for a time appointed, for the LORD is in His Holy Temple, as a righteous king, who bringeth woes on all evildoers.

The following lines are from a Greek poet, Theognis, and embody the same way of looking at things :

Yes, insolence, injustice, every crime,
Rapine, and wrong may prosper for a time,
Yet shall they travel on to swift decay,
Who tread the crooked path, and hollow way.

In this way the thought is recognised, that though "the mills of God grind slowly, they grind exceeding small." The view that evil is immediately punished is thus modified. It is granted that there may be much prosperity to the wicked, and that even for a long time, but it is not to be for ever. Zophar adds the consideration, that even though the wicked man dies apparently unpunished, his children will suffer. They will have to hand back the spoils, which their fathers had wrongfully obtained. It is also declared, that though he may outwardly appear prosperous, he has no real enjoyment, but is in constant alarm and fear of trouble.

To this, however, "Job" has the reply at once, that this too is contrary to the observed facts of life, so far as he has seen. All around him wrong-doing secures prosperity ; the wrong-doers are happy, and continue so up to the time of their death, in which there are no bands. After them, also, their children are established in the land. While God's Israel was suffering, their oppressors were in great ease. Seeing

this, the view was held by many that punishment seems to be reserved for the children, but the prophet Ezekiel denounced this opinion very strongly. The people were saying, that because the fathers had eaten sour grapes, therefore the children's teeth are set on edge. This proverb, the prophet says, is no more to be used in Israel, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father."

Just as actions were viewed in their isolation, so here individuals are viewed separately, and apart from those others, with whom they are bound up in the social whole. "No man liveth unto himself, and no one dieth unto himself." The great modern thoughts of environment and heredity, of the wholeness and solidarity of the race were not before men's minds then. A very much deeper and prolonged inquiry had yet to be made into all the facts of life before any satisfying solution of the problem of suffering could be reached. The Friends were only groping their way on the surface of things, and it was ever easy to bring more new facts to confront and disprove their theories.

Thus even their modified view that suffering must in a very short time overtake the evildoer, which still bases itself on the doctrine that suffering is the punishment of sin, does not meet the difficulties raised. The full meaning of suffering has yet to be discovered. For as we have said, and ever need to emphasise, the connection of sin and suffering is not on the surface; some

deeper diagnosis must be made to find out why the wicked do not receive punishment. In other words, the principles, according to which the world moves on, must be cleared up. The inner way of things must justify itself to the heart and conscience of the best, for a moral God cannot be indifferent to great moral and spiritual issues. And the human mind will not be stayed in this its quest. God moves in a right way, it feels, and that way must be discovered. The mystery, that seems to gather round the way of God, is only the result of our imperfect theories, which are all based on incomplete knowledge of what goes on. The world is not out of joint, nor unintelligible. Such a view can only find utterance on the lips of a man, who is himself "out of joint," and unwilling to apply his mind still further in a great search, truly worthy of all that is noble in him.

In considering the offered solutions of the Friends, we have also to bear in mind, how they were influenced by a geocentric view of the world. The earth then was regarded as a flat superficies, with its chambers in the north and south, and high above was the heaven, on which and in which God lived, surrounded by His ministering angels. The earth was the centre, around which the sun and moon revolved. From as it were the outside, judgments came; they were sent or permitted. God was, therefore, responsible for all that happened on the earth. He was supposed to intervene to protect

the good, and to punish the wicked. If He did not do so, He was to blame. Although increasing knowledge has given us wholly different conceptions of the Universe, and made us think of God, who works through the laws of His own appointment, not immediately or directly, as by interposition, or intervention, as the Friends held, yet the old view dies hard. Still men are found, who are so oblivious to all the teachings of science, that they expect God in some way to intervene on their behalf. They refuse to see Him in His great laws and in His continual working ; they refuse to hear Moses and the prophets, and will not be persuaded, they say, until one rise from the dead. Such persons, Christ has assured us, will not be persuaded, even then. Lowell has well spoken of such, who really miss God by wrong ways of looking for Him. For of God he says :

Thou,
Walking Thy garden, still commun'st with men,
Missed in the commonplace of miracle.

Men have, as they say, identified themselves with the cause of God, and served Him sincerely. As long as things go on well, there is no remark, but to these good people there comes a time of trouble, of sickness, or unemployment, and they complain. They think that God should have done something for them. They thus still hold a theory on which God is conceived as intervening for the good, and they think of God after all

as a *deus ex machina*, a food supplier, at their beck and call. When such a wrong view of God, as this is, breaks down, then unbelief is apt to follow. Let it be observed, however, that there was not here true faith in God at all, but only belief in a particular view of God. Men, however, do not always distinguish carefully enough between faith in God, and belief in their theories as to God. In the recently issued Report on the Poor Law it is remarked, "The world of work to the typical casual is governed by chances, for the good are not more successful in securing work than the evil." The present arrangements of the labour market are so much under the control of selfish influences, that the laws of God seem to be thwarted on every side.

Avoiding a wrong view of Him, as constantly interfering to put things right, let us seek for a better, according to which we shall find Him ever on the side of all that makes for righteousness, in a thousand ways working so as to overcome all opposing forces. This is a world of moral freedom, which brooks no interference, and has to be guided into wise methods of working. To this guidance the resources of the divine are ever being applied. It is not always easy for the soul oppressed to disentangle itself from a false view, and rise through the dark clouds, to where the sun is always shining in brightness. The wicked man seems to go through life in triumphal procession. His burial is a notable festival. His mausoleum is the cynosure of every eye. Nothing

that happens to him gives the observer any hint that the divine disapproval is resting upon him. And others follow him, meeting him at last. Such is the picture in the outward seeming, life viewed from the outside, and superficially. And with this outward view many seem to rest satisfied, and make no effort to press to the deep meaning of it all.

Long-continued distress, an earthquake, or a plague, like the Black Death, make men atheists on a poor or imperfect view of the world. Things may seem to outrage their views, but better views will take the place of those, which are outraged. This is, however, only to anticipate a statement of the truer view, which we have yet to attempt in our closing chapters.

Meanwhile let us pass from these more preliminary considerations by remarking on the utter hopelessness of reaching any satisfying solution either on the basis of the theory of the Friends as to suffering, or on the views as to the nature and working of God not only then current, but for long after.

Let us cast aside all our imperfect opinions as to the nature of God and receive a fuller and more adequate one, and thus we shall get rid of many of those difficulties, which only spring from such views. In the clearer light, in which we shall see God, we shall find our perplexities passing away, as the mists of earth before the rising sun. The experience of revolt, and complaint will be seen to have been engendered by

our poorer light, and our limited vision. In the truer light, which is ever flowing in upon us, and with far more widely extended vision, with raised horizons, we shall reach the land of love, where the nobleness of suffering in a worthy cause will appear, and through our taking that view and position firmly, and earnestly endeavouring fully to carry out all that is involved therein, we shall bring about a state of things, in which there shall be nothing to hurt, or to destroy in all the land. This was the vision that filled, and gladdened the prophet's heart.

CHAPTER V

THE STANDARD, OR IDEAL OF THE GOOD MAN IN "JOB," AND ITS REQUIREMENTS

IN our former chapters the thought of the good man has been much before us. As we approach the end of the words of "Job," we are greatly impressed with the lofty standard, or ideal of goodness presented to us in them. For while Eliphaz, as with sharp surgeon knife, probes the wounded spirit, in search of some evil thing, some malignant germ, we are brought face to face with those virtues, and excellences of character, that were held in high esteem at that time. It is ever by their moral judgments, that a people's worth is to be discovered. A low standard of morality marks a nation on the brink of decay, while a high ideal shows a people reaching forth to higher and better things.

The standard of morals is set forth in the splendid manifesto, as it might be called, in which "Job" replies to the unworthy insinuations of Eliphaz. The virtues, which are claimed, are what we would call the social ones. They are not the "self-regarding virtues," but rather those which have regard to others. Now while the

virtues of individual character are of supreme value, these social virtues are so necessary in a society constituted like ours. The absence of such social virtues from so many lives is the dire cause of most of those social evils, of which we have such reason to complain in our modern days, and in presence of which so often, both Church and State stand so utterly weak and helpless. Doubtless, the cure for those evils lies just here. For how true it is that

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven.

According to PLATO the great cardinal virtues are these four:—Temperance, Courage, Justice, and Wisdom, the virtues of the individual, and yet determined for that philosopher, “more by the nature of the State, than of the moral person.”

In the book before us the virtues have a more practical dress, and stand in close relation to the throbbing life of man. And they are these:—Brotherly kindness. The clothing of the naked. The giving of water to the thirsty, and of bread to the hungry. The lawful tenure of land. The pleading of the widow’s cause, and the helping of the orphan. As we mention these, one by one, are we not reminded of the words used by our Lord in the great Judgment parable? (Matt. xxv.). And may we not think that the passage here may have in some way suggested very much to the great Master, to whom the Old Testament was dear? Truly the failure to give due place to the Master’s teaching in this parable, with

the undue emphasis, which has been laid on doctrine, has been the world's loss and the Church's shame. "Then the king shall say, Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was a-thirsty, and ye gave Me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me. I was sick, and ye visited Me. I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." How much fuller indeed is the teaching of Jesus as to the relations, that should prevail among men, than anything even adumbrated in "Job," we shall see by and by, but here certainly emphasis is laid on virtues, that belong to the very highest ideal of human life. And if these had in any worthy manner been carried out, how different would have been the conditions prevailing in the society of to-day. If only they could now be adopted as the rule of action, what a splendid reconstruction of society would at once be in progress among us! In it no need would be allowed to exist, and so one great cause of suffering, suffering that can in no sense be said to come from, or be sent by, God, would be removed. That golden age would then be near unto us, when "the good of all would be the rule of each." And surely virtue is more than knowledge; it is actual service, a service that seeks to embody its ideals in life, and conduct.

Eliphaz had pressed just the importance of these virtues, and by the possession, or absence, of them, "Job" expresses his willingness to be judged. In what has been called his great "Oath of clearing," "Job" admits that in these virtues is to be found all that is essential to the character of a good man. If it could have been proved that in any degree or in any part "Job" had failed here, then indeed the Friends could have found the "root of the matter," that is the cause of the suffering, and to their mind a complete explanation of the time of trouble, through which he was passing. Consequently, it was of the highest importance that "Job" should be examined by the severest test of that time, so as to make it abundantly clear, that the goodness, which he claimed as the servant of God, was of the worthiest kind, and that he was worthy of his high calling, and thus one able to call on God, and to draw near to Him without any hesitation.

At the very centre of this essential goodness lay the duty of caring for others, and in a truly unselfish spirit bearing their burdens. The more we come into touch with the best thought of man in any age the consciousness of being his "brother's keeper" is seen to have had some recognition. It is interesting to read on an old Egyptian tomb the following inscription,

Doing that which is right, hating that which is wrong,
I was bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty,
Clothes to the naked, refuge to those in want.

And in this connection, we may quote the old Greek saying, that “the poor man is the patrimony of God.” Thus the good man does not in any way stand aloof or separate from the community. His worth and virtue are determined by the manner in which he discharges his social duties. To Plato man is a citizen of a State, and if the individual seems to lose his personality in that State, it is for us, while emphasising the worth of character, and personal independence, to see that we fall not behind these men of old, in clearly keeping in the very forefront our duty to the social whole, of which we form part, and on which we are dependent for our own well-being. Just in this way a man’s life becomes filled with a sweetness of content of ever highest value to himself and to others.

The way in which “Job” passes through this ordeal was very specially fitted to make its own impression on the minds of men then. A supreme significance attaches itself to the last reply of his, because in it the sense of the innocence and integrity of the suffering servant of God has its highest and final expression, and to it there is no answer possible. As we listen to it we feel how poor were the reasonings of the Friends, and how utterly unable they were, with their proverbial maxims, to meet the real situation so magnificently set before them. And as these men, the representatives of the best wisdom of the olden days, pass away from the scene, and we bid them a long, last farewell, our conviction deepens that

There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

All that they had said only seemed to add pain and poignancy to the already great suffering of this "Job." And this is ever true, that our sufferings are made worse to bear by the view we or others take of them. If they are in any way regarded as deserved, and therefore viewed as punishment sent to requite ill-doing, when the conscience within disclaims all guilt, then the sufferer has a new pain added that goes beyond all telling. But, if that view is shown to be false, and another, and a better view can be held, giving an explanation of suffering, which proves that it possesses in itself, or in its results, some great moral worth, then even the heaviest griefs may be made wholly different, and girdled as with a light divine. It is only, when with "pitfall and with gin God seems to beset the way men travel," that they are led to regard life "as a sorry scheme," and in a Byronic spirit to raise their loud protestations.

It now remains for our author to give final utterance to his deep conviction as to the sufferer's complete integrity, as he would show him to us fully realising in his own life, and conduct all that was required by the highest standard and best ideal of those days.

In his solitary grandeur, rising as a great mountain top above the plain, the good man is now described in all the reality, and conscious fulness of what is right and true. And yet he is a great sufferer.

In this closing statement there are three parts, as follows:—(1) There is a Retrospect. (2) A description of the changed circumstances. And (3) we have the last declaration of innocence.

The passage begins with a retrospect, in which a glance is thrown back on the former days, with all their outward prosperity and unruffled calm. Then suffering was almost unknown, and life moved on as a river smoothly and silently, untouched by the sudden storm, so soon to burst. In this looking back, we are transplanted to the old happy times, with all their idyllic simplicity. All is so delightful. No outward trouble had come, nor that worse than any external loss, that inner sorrow of heart, with its questionings as to the meaning of life, all unanswered, and yet demanding an answer. Life, like a shallow stream, meandered along through lovely glens and valleys. Ahead there seemed a vista of rare beauty, and behind lay the hills in verdure dressed, closing in the scene.

All was as the paradise of God. He walked in His garden, and His presence was felt in a very sweet, and immediate consciousness. His power was seen in all around, and His working was recognised in every movement of throbbing or pulsing life. He was seen in the sparkling fountain, in the dew and the rain. His goodness flashed from cloud and hill and tree, from the sky ever blue, and the sod ever green. Then the divine could be seen, and that without any doubt, or question in sun, and eagle's wing, and insect's

eye. All things seemed to be under the control of beings so divine, supernatural indeed, but each one acting on impulses and feelings all so human. Heaven and earth did not seem to lie far apart. As in its infancy heaven seemed to lie about the race.

The simple joys of home, and field, with all the honours of the tribe in fullest measure were there. Great, indeed, was our hero, as a king of men, as he was blessed by every passer-by, the helper of the orphan, and the bringer of gladness to the widow's heart. No cloud hung on the horizon, and all went "merry as a marriage bell."

As it was in the individual case, so was it with the nation, in its best days, its golden age. Thus was it with Jerusalem, before the days of sad captivity came on. In the reigns of Hezekiah and the good King Josiah, she had enjoyed great prosperity. She had drunk her wines upon the lees, and her life contained no thought at all of the dread days ahead. The city of the great king seemed inviolable, as it was "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole land." Mount Zion could rejoice, and the daughters thereof could be glad, as they walked around her, and told the towers on every side. The glorious Temple, of which they were so proud, stood in their midst, and the rolling away of Sennacherib's hosts, in fulfilment of the words of Isaiah, had given her a wonderful sense of security. The sayings of the prophet about the Virgin daughter of Zion were ringing, with all

their gracious sweetness, in the people's ears. God was keeping watch over her, as over His own vineyard, and none surely could do her harm. The light shone all around, and it then appeared as if this condition of things were to last for ever. Hence when the words of Jeremiah, so Cassandra-like, were heard telling of evil days in store for a people with so many privileges in their midst, they could not put in him any trust at all, but even called in question his authority to speak in the Name of God.

But now, alas ! the scene was changed. In a moment, all was plunged in sad and sudden darkness, in the very gloom of despair. He, who had been the joy and praise of his circle, is now only the taunt and by-word of them all. He loses all ; his health and strength are gone ; his path is overwhelmed ; he sits in the midst a pathetic figure of direst woe. "The heavens above him are as brass, and the earth beneath him as iron." His peace of mind was gone, and his cries are loud and unanswered. He is as one forsaken, both of God and man. He weeps sore in the night, with none to comfort him, and he is the companion of jackals, and ostriches.

Thus also, had it happened to Jerusalem, for now

Judah is gone into captivity, to suffer sorrow and bondage great,
She dwelleth among the nations, and findeth nought of rest,
From the daughter of Zion all her glory is departed far.

For this great and sudden catastrophe there seemed to be no explanation, nor any justification. There had been no change of moral conditions. All these things were going on as they had been. Our hero was still the good man, and Jerusalem was still professing allegiance to her Yahveh God. If prosperity had been once granted, as it was, why should it not be continued? Thus a moment of supreme crisis had arisen, and men were thrown on their beam ends, as they were compelled to face issues, which they had never faced before. Heart-searching, in a way never known before, is now the order of the day. No satisfying explanation is found in the words of the Wise, nor in the writings of the Deuteronomist, all of which bade men see that the good were the special care of God, who sent trouble on the wicked. Here there is indeed extreme suffering, and the suffering person, or nation, embodies the best ideal, as hitherto known or enjoined. How is it all to be explained?

And now, lastly, we have the final declaration of innocence. The covenanted virtues of the good man are set forth again, and in full detail. First of all, there is chastity, which is deemed all essential, and rightly so, because it is always a foundation virtue of a true society. Then are we given a look into the most friendly and delightful relations prevailing between master and servant, relations, which we might well wish should be renewed again. It is deserving of notice that here both master and man are viewed as each the

child of God, and therefore bound together in the closest bonds of a common relationship, even that of humanity. The master here, our hero, can look upon his servants, and feel that he has treated them all well, because he has borne in mind this true consideration. So far as he knew, he had caused no friction among them, and his conscience is free from blame. He recognised that they, as men, had the same needs, and aspirations as he himself, and should be dealt with as such. How this cuts away the vile system of slavery, and all that cruel way of dealing with men as if they were merely tools, in a great wealth-producing machine. He remembered those that belonged to their households. No want could exist in a community, where the determining consideration even in eating was, Are the orphans fed? Our good man felt that his aim in life had not been to amass wealth, but to do real service to others. And here too was a religion, which did not worship any created thing, but God, the most High alone.

Along with this went a consideration also for an enemy, with no joy in his suffering, an anticipation of what Christ had yet to say on this matter. All claims for help or increase of wages received immediate attention at his hand, and his door was always open for the reception of strangers. There was no cowardly hiding of fault, no selfish keeping away from public duty, and no neglect of the common obligations of life. He did all he possibly could for God and man, so far as he saw, so far as it was required

from him then. Thus he was a truly good man not in any shallow or self-complacent manner, but in deed and in truth. All this he feels himself to be in the eyes of God, and he boldly challenges any one to disprove any part of what he said.

In this way it is shown that the sufferings which had befallen Jerusalem were no proof that she had in any way sinned, or incurred the anger of Heaven, but that they had come to her while still loyal to her covenanted God and religion. A later age might have a higher ideal of a more spiritual kind, both as to the nature of God and as to His requirements, but judged by the standard and ideal of that time, in what respect had Jerusalem failed? Her sufferings were not a punishment, whatever else they may have been. We know what view the author took of them in his Prologue.

With this final declaration "Job" passes from our view as his three Friends have already passed. As his words come now to an end, we feel that in the original drama, the justification of "Job," as one who had not charged God foolishly, would have had its place. What follows in the book as it lies before us is a further development of the problem, and that in even a less individualised form than hitherto. As we have suggested, the Speech from the Storm, and the speeches of "Elihu," are later, and stand by themselves as distinct contributions to the evolution of the question. For this, of course, there was a great need felt. So far there had

been no satisfying solution; what has been given has been largely of a negative kind, telling us what suffering is not. In the Prologue the view that suffering is a public demonstration of the staying power of goodness under the sorest test is amply corroborated, as the sufferer stands firm, and now receives the divine approval, while the Friends are definitely condemned, and only freed from a worse fate at the request of "Job" himself.

Most fittingly, therefore, we think, the Epilogue could have stood here. The sufferings, which had served their purpose, and which would thus come to an end, would be followed by a restoration of our hero to an even happier and more prosperous state than before. This happy result, however, need not be regarded as indicating the author's view, that this comes by way of reward for a brave stand. Rather to our mind, it would here appear, that it was his conviction, and therefore a prophecy, full of comfort to his people, that after the sore captivity, there would come the glad time of Restoration, when the people, so long and sorely tried, would as "the ransomed of the LORD return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Then indeed, would "they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing" would "flee away."

CHAPTER VI

THE "YAHVEH" SPEECH, FROM THE WHIRL-WIND, OR THE VIEW THAT SUFFERING IS A GREAT MYSTERY

HAVING now finished what we regard as the original drama, all so complete in its three parts, as containing the Prologue, the great controversy on earth with its long speeches, and the Epilogue, with the restoration of the sufferer to a condition of happiness, better than that, which he had formerly enjoyed, we pass on to what we hold with many to be additions made by a later time, to express other views. It is a question, whether we should first take up for consideration the "Yahveh" speech, or the "Elihu" contribution, with its seven pieces, for in our Bible the speeches of "Elihu" come before that of "Yahveh." It is, however, becoming more and more clear that the "Elihu" speeches are the latest addition to the book, as they contain a view, which was much later adopted, even this, that suffering is sent as a means of discipline, and not a punishment as in the argument of the Friends, and, curiously, in the current doctrine of the Jews, in

the time of our Lord. The question about those, on whom the Tower in Siloam fell, or those, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, or that man, who was born blind, clearly shows, that the then current view was that suffering was in some way the punishment of sin. This view our Lord condemned most firmly, and yet it has lingered long, even into our own day.

The placing of the "Elihu" speeches before the great dramatic interposition of "Yahveh" proves that the editor of the final form of the book, disapproved of any attempt to solve the problem of suffering, and that the true way of looking at it is to regard it as an insoluble mystery, to be treated with reverence by man. It seems better, however, to deal with this view first as it is characteristic of probably an earlier time, than that of "Elihu." Probably the words used by the writer in "Lux Mundi" express still the views of very many, for he says, that "suffering has long ago been probed to the utmost of our capacity, and remains a mystery still." And some, forgetting the wonderful progress, that has been made in knowledge, maintain that there must ever remain some mystery, as a test of faith, and as the final law of the Universe. Is it not strange that in the spirit of old Zophar, it is still held that those, who know so much, know this so surely, that there is a limit to their knowing? Hitherto in our poem, we have seen our author digging deeper into the heart of things, but now a halt is called, and what seems a rebuke

is given to what is called "the presumption of the intellect, and the bravado of the heart."

In the form of the very highest art this takes its place in our poem as a representation of the mind of God, finding its voice in the rolling thunder or mighty storm, with all its awing influences. The divine is here associated with power and outward majesty, as in the earlier views of the Almighty. The element of force is brought to bear on man, for the world had not yet learned that "force is no remedy." As in our days of childhood, the lightning flash, or thunder crash, filled us with fear and trembling, so once it was in the world's story, those times of ignorance, of which St. Paul speaks in another connection, when an eclipse, or some unusual phenomenon caused consternation, even to brave men, as many an ancient episode tells. How strange to us of modern days is it now to read of those events, which led up, for example, to the sacrifice of the beautiful, and high-souled Iphigenia. For months the great army of the mighty Agamemnon had lain idle in its fleet, all becalmed. When, at last, discontent at enforced delay appeared about to cause trouble, Calchas, the strange but representative priest and prophet of a dark and ignorant time, went about crying that the gods were angry, and were demanding "the blood of a stainless maid, else must we remain here and perish."

When Elijah was in his great despair, he was taught to look for the divine, not in the tre-

mendous forces of nature, which are destructive by reason of power, but rather to listen for that, which comes as in a whisper to the listening ear, even in the still small voice. Here, however, an older, and less worthier view of the way, in which God speaks to man is given, for we are bidden to hear what comes out of the whirlwind. And not unseldom is it the case that thought is directed more to the great whirlwinds of life, than to those constant and regular ways, in which not now and then, but always, and that in love and wisdom, God is speaking to our race. How much they lose, who wait for the special and extraordinary, and fail to use the ordinary, as the revelation of the divine!

In trying to rightly understand this passage, we must, also, bear in mind the method of the writer here adopted. To express his own views, he speaks in the Name of God, and duly to emphasise his convictions, he introduces all the elements of the awe-creating whirlwind. Doubtless, this is the necessary way of all prophets. Their new word cometh as a "Thus saith the LORD." But face to face with many false prophets, and those, who made a gain by prophesying smooth things to the people, the splendid prophet, Jeremiah, had to warn his nation against the wrong use of even this old, and honoured formula, "The burden of the LORD," and to impress on them the truth, that, the true prophet must be one in very close and intimate communion with God (Jer. xxiii. 37).

A statement as to truth may come clothed with every manner of external authority, as here with that of the Whirlwind, or to Moses as from the unconsumable fire, or to us in these modern days, with the imprimatur of existing authority in State, Church, or College, but to us now the only valid proof of any doctrine is contained in itself, in the way in which it carries its own appeal to heart and conscience, and thus verifies itself by its harmony with the inmost and deepest experience of the soul. And thus we say—

They are cowards, who dare not be,
In the right with two or three.

Science has often been threatened by those, who have spoken with a borrowed authority, as in the name of truth, but wholly without its spirit, and its power of conviction. And thus there has appeared a divorce, fraught only with evil consequences, between science, and those speaking in the name of the Church.

In the Prologue, and here in the Whirlwind speech, the views of the writers are put forth as those of God Himself. Thus the all supreme, and infallible God has been made to stand responsible for the advancing, but yet fallible and imperfect views of man. It has taken a long time for men to learn that what they declare in the name of religion, often with terrible anathemas attached, was only that which they

up to that time of utterance had been able to perceive as to truth. Consequently all progress in knowledge should be accompanied, not with denunciation, or prohibition of future inquiry, but with a deep and humble conviction that the fuller truth, and its expression in formulated doctrine is still far ahead of man.

Many, who have read the Book of Job, without remembering this, have spoken about the advent of God, and the settling of all questions for Job and all others similarly troubled, as completed finally by the determination of the Voice from the Whirlwind. Some do not like questions, but man must question, and learn to answer questions. Meredith seems to pour contempt on our questions as "a mortal brood," as he warns us against the legends, but no one knew better than he, that it is by true and valid questioning that all worthy advance is made in human knowledge. There are of course, foolish and irrelevant questions, which should not be asked at all, questions as to a why and wherefore, but questions as to the facts of life, and their real meaning are those, that must be reverently and insistently asked, and as we receive ever fuller answers to such, we truly find that "our work is everlasting."

We have now reached a portion of the book, which we are studying, where suffering, as a fact of life, is viewed as something to be removed wholly out of the region of questioning, and to be regarded as a matter about which no questions are to

be asked, inasmuch as it is something that concerns the divine Sovereignty, and must therefore be dealt with in a humble and lowly attitude of soul. An embargo is put on all inquiry here. It is, however, quite manifest that to enjoin this is to impose on the human spirit an impossible condition. It may, nay must be reverent, but it cannot long maintain an unquestioning attitude toward such a great fact as suffering, so closely, and so continually affecting its highest interests on every side.

It is easy, indeed, to see how such an attitude has been enjoined on men. The great perplexities, which have gathered round the various attempts to solve the questions raised, and the many failures met in such endeavours, have led up to a kind of weariness, and despair as to any attainable solution. Hence further investigation has been forbidden, and justification for this prohibition has been found in a particular kind of philosophical theory.

It has not been sufficiently noticed that every honest attempt to deal with the problem has in some effective way made a contribution to a more complete method of treating the matter, by removing difficulties out of the way, and enabling the mind to focus itself, and fix its attention upon aspects of the problem, that had hitherto escaped notice, and so had been neglected. The emphasis had been laid on the failure, and the elements of advance had been passed over. In this way it had come to be

maintained that there was an essential incapacity in the human mind, as it is at present constituted, to know or understand either God or His ways among men. The mind of man is finite, and God is infinite; the mind is limited and conditioned, while God is the absolute. Hence His plans and ways of working must transcend man's knowledge, and so be past finding out. In every age this position has had its supporters, and it has its advocate in the writer of the Storm episode. He must have belonged to the circle of the "Wisdom" writers, and found his place among those, who wrote such a book as that of Ecclesiastes in the Canon, and the poem on the Unsearchableness of Wisdom, which is preserved for us in the Book of Job.

The particular point of view adopted here in the Yahveh speech is that God is the great Creator, and that man is only a weak creature. God is, therefore, so high, and thus far beyond the reach of the mind of man. He must of necessity remain unknown, and unknowable. There can be no bridging of a gulf in its very nature quite impassable. God was alone in the beginning, when He made all things. Man was not there with Him, and so cannot have any idea of how all this wonderful world, so fair, and beautiful, was formed by the hand of the Almighty. Nay more, man is of yesterday, and if it be an exaggeration to speak of him as knowing nothing, yet it is alleged that he is certainly disqualified from pronouncing any opinion, or giving anything like an

adequate judgment as to the reasons of the plan of the Universe. It is argued that because he was not at the beginning of the process, he is therefore unable to discover the principles of the process, and to understand its on going, or in any way to trace the causes of things, and find out the relations, that prevail between the several parts of the splendid whole. In all this there is, of course, a depreciation of reason, God's best and highest gift to man. Up to that time, no doubt, the mind had not shown its wondrous power in its far-reaching discoveries of the facts and laws of life, which have been the glory of our more recent days. This had yet to come. But even then reason had shown its splendid powers in great philosophies, and in magnificent flights of abstract thought.

With the author of this portion we can take our place in wonder and adoration, as we think of all the works of God's mighty hand in the heavens above, and in the earth around. Nay surely, with all that we now know, ours should be a greater wonder and adoration. Verily the heavens declare His glory, "and the firmament showeth His handiwork." We see and recognise His power and wisdom in the making of the shining orbs of light, in setting mighty oceans in their beds, in determining the seasons, in forming the earth, and mountains great and high, in devising the vast expanse of the Universe, all of which lies open to the great Creator's eye. We, too, can wander with admiring vision among the birds, and animals great and small, noting the oxen in

their might, and the war-horse unmoved amid the din of war. In awed amazement we can recall the fabled monsters of the sea and land, nay, we can in our great museums gaze upon their reconstructed forms. Yes, as thus we behold all "the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be" we feel a sense of the littleness of man creeping over us, and we find ourselves saying with the psalmist,

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that Thou visit'st him?

With the writer we feel ourselves humbled in the dust, as listening to the Voice of God out of the Whirlwind, we acknowledge His greatness, and would worship at His feet. The making of God to speak thus to man from out of the whirlwind was a most skilful and striking method, most admirably adapted to impress man with just this sense of his own weakness and incapacity to know God. Nothing could have been more fitted than this to teach the doctrine of the writer, and make man feel his utter inability to cope with the apparently mysterious problems of being.

And yet another thought comes in upon our mind with mighty force, and it is this, that the very method adopted to show man his weakness and incapacity, is a method, which at the same time is most fitted to show man how great he is, and to reveal to him the heights of knowledge to which he can ascend. For here the writer by the power of his mind, and reason, with his soaring

imagination, gives us a grand conception of God. How great, truly, must be the capacity of the mind that can do all this! When told to go so far, and no farther here, the mind is impressed with the distance, which it has travelled, and inspired with its new seeing it is strangely moved to pursue its flight yet further still in the empyrean of God. For if so much is known, then why not more, it asks, and that in no irreverent spirit at all. Thus here in what seems a rebuke to man's ambitious mind, there is after all clearest proof of his greatness, and an explanation full indeed of all that makes him be so ambitious. Thus a testimony is borne not to the limitation of reason, but to its essential kinship with the divine, which it seeks ever more and more to know.

When an effort is made to dwell upon man's inability to unravel the enigmas of the universe, many of which are due to the form of his own thinking, and the way he presents things to himself, man is deeply impressed with his high calling, and conscious of the supreme responsibility thus laid upon him to follow on to "know the Lord." From one point of view man has been spoken of, "As this quintessence of dust," but from another he is regarded as made in the image of God. He is but a reed, yes, but "a reed, that thinks!" The Universe, all around him, is great and so overwhelming! But who sees all its wonder and beauty? Who takes his stand upon its heights, and feels ever more an appreciation of its majesty?

And when the poet bids us say,

Behold ! We know not anything !
We can but trust,

the reply is at once made, that in order to a perfect trust, there must be a perfect knowledge. But it is argued that mystery must belong to God, and is indeed bound up in His greatness. And those who would deprecate reason find their voice in these words,

How would I praise,
If such as I might understand,
Make out and reckon on His ways ?

Due humility has also been enjoined, as we are bidden not only to bear in mind that our knowledge is limited, but that "He laid the fetter." On the other hand man feels that he must lay aside the fettering limitations of sloth and ignorance, and rise to the full stature of his being, and eagerly press on until he find his rest in a full and satisfying knowledge of his God and Father.

The rebuke, with which the speech begins, condemns man for darkening counsel by the way in which he had been dealing with the question of suffering. Man is told that it is God's place to ask questions of him, rather than for him to ask questions about God. It is urged that the asking of questions here will only raise more difficulties, than lie in the acceptance of current beliefs. And greater difficulties will emerge, if these views are rejected.

In answer the mind feels that it is not God

that is putting questions, but only the mind itself in the name of God. It is felt to be wholly unsatisfactory to be told not to ask questions for fear of raising difficulties; this is only a stimulus to further inquiry after all. The desire grows in the mind for a more adequate view, which will reconcile all difficulties, by bravely meeting them in the face, and by not ignoring any of the differences that arise, it hopes to reach a truer synthesis. In other words a more, rather than a less full, treatment of things is demanded. True, some questions may darken counsel, but counsel is only to be made clear, not by suppressing, or condemning questions, but by looking at things on every side, and from every point of view in a brave, and heroic way. If not to all, to some, indeed, and those the best of men, a solution is necessary; it is their very life.

Such are indignant at any embargo being put on inquiry by any one, or from any quarter. This has been done on the ground that if man is to know about God, this knowledge must come by way of revelation. God must speak, and man must humbly listen. Here again, it requires to be seen that it is to man that the revelation must come, and that, therefore, he must have the capacity to receive it, so that as the revelation increases, the mind of man must be expanding in its ability to understand God and truth. While from the one side, we speak about God revealing Himself to man, from the other side, we must think of man discovering God.

What is at issue seems to be the power of human reason. Limits have been set to reason, but this is done only by reason itself. How far reason can go, and what is the measure of its capacity, can alone be determined in experience, and not by any preconception, or prejudging of its qualities. "Ambulando solvitur." Reason ever seems more and more fit for its work. Its limits, if limits there are, can only be known as it goes bravely on to do the work, which it imposes upon itself. And in so doing it is ever surmounting old limits, and gaining new triumphs.

A distinction has, also, been made between the truths of faith and the truths of reason. And this position has been taken up that the truths of faith were not only beyond the power of reason to discover for itself, but that "they could not be comprehended now that they have been revealed." The doctrines of the Church were supposed to be a given deposit, or datum of thought, which had never come into man's possession in any way by the use of his faculties or to be criticised by them; they were there to be received and believed. "Religion," it has been said, "must have some unexplained function to perform." This is what lies in an ultra-rational region, or a falsely conceived supernatural, which has no point of contact with the natural. The mind, however, refuses to make such distinctions, and claims to be able to deal with all valid truth, which must be verified by reason, if it is to have

an abiding place in man, as his very own. Even when some writers speak about the truths of religion being incomprehensible, they go on to try to make them as intelligible as they can, thereby appealing to the very faculty they desire to limit.

The very belief that there is a God, to take the first idea of religion, implies a certain amount of reasoning on some great experience of the soul, so that some definite thoughts may be associated with what would be otherwise altogether abstract, and vague. Our writer assumes that certain attributes which are understandable belong to God. He is at least a God of power and wisdom. Now this simple conception of God had been reached by the exercise of the mind of man, and the same mind in its advancing development was going on to reach, as by its questions it has reached, a higher idea of God, as far more than a God of power and wisdom, as much better every way, a God of love. This advance to a clearer conception of God, in which all the elements of revelation are received, appropriated, and assimilated, is accompanied with the assurance that when God is better understood, then more and more the old difficulties, which went along with wrong or inadequate thinking about God, will disappear too.

In other words, the mystery which men see shrouding and veiling the ways of God, and the understanding of what He is doing, will remove if only God is known more truly. A God, who is

ever revealing and unveiling Himself in human history, is surely One that will make His ways more clear to our reason, if we pursue our course without faltering. For even to speak of a veiled God is already to pierce the veil, as this implies a knowledge of what is there.

The capacity to know God in any way that would be of use to us in our endeavour to solve the problem of suffering has been assailed in another wholly unjustifiable manner. It has been argued that, when we predicate certain attributes as justice or goodness of God, we cannot use them in the same sense as when we apply them to man. Of course this is true, that the contents, and meaning of such attributes may not always be adequately conceived, but clearly it is only in their fullest and best sense, only when they are raised to their highest power, that they are applied to God. It would never do to think that there is a human justice, and a divine justice, a divine goodness and a human goodness in the sense that these were different, or as if there were two kinds of justice and goodness. These attributes may vary in their fulness, and that fulness in its highest form be only found in the best, but justice is justice, and goodness is goodness. Truly the "difference between God and man is greater than the difference between man and a child"; but it is one of degree and not of kind. It would be alarming, "if the highest human morality which we are capable of perceiving," capable of, in the long last reach of the

mind, "did not conform to the morality of God, and sanction the principles of the divine government." When we call God just and good, and seek to find out how justice and goodness characterise all His ways, we do so reverently, and with the full conviction that we know what justice and goodness are. Said one strongly, but with right and conviction, "I will call no being good, who is not what I mean, when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures. " To suppose that justice in God differs from justice in man is pure scepticism."

We may feel, at times, that reason moves in narrowest bounds, and does not always rise to the heights of its high calling, but that is not the fault of reason, it is the fault of those men who do not use it well, and we may be sure that these bounds are not fixed or eternal. It is not the pity that "men think, but that they do not think enough." The defect of rationalism is not that it makes use of reason, but that it does not make a fuller use of it. It stops short and rests in its early thinkings; it should go on to better things. Reason, as God's great gift to man, should under highest impulse and splendid inspiration prove worthy of itself, and know God, its giver, and object, and destiny. It should not lay its armour down until the day is won.

In his great classical work, "The Analogy," Butler declared that "the constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it are all mystery, as much as the Christian dispensa-

tion." He has depicted in dark and tragic colours the anarchy and chaos which seem to deform the realm of an omnipotent moral Governor. Here then is that imperfect view of things which opposes God and nature, and findeth "Nature, red in tooth and claw." A truer, fuller view is demanded, and must be found, in which love shall be seen to be "Creation's final law." This will yet require some special treatment and clearer statement in another chapter, but here we feel that in a finer, truer view of the world some purpose may be seen gleaming through "the secular confusions of time," bringing all things into captivity to itself, and making us feel sure that the farther we advance, the more shall mystery pass away, and the realm of the known, and the rational be recognised in all its wide extent.

The writer of the Analogy occupies very much the same position as the writer of the "Yahveh" speech, when he says, "What men require is to have all difficulties cleared; and that is, or at least for anything we know to the contrary, it may be the same, as requiring to comprehend the divine nature, and the whole plan of Providence from everlasting to everlasting." And as this can't be done, both writers bid men stop desiring to have their difficulties cleared away, a command to which obedience is quite impossible.

But while we thus regard the rebuke of the "Yahveh" writer to be in the main wrongly

directed, so far as it would interfere with a reverent inquiry into the problem of suffering, a value is to be found in it as a protest against a merely abstract kind of speculation, which had no clear appreciation of the facts of a growing experience of life in its ever-deepening content, a philosophy that was wholly theoretic, and which has no solid ground, like to that of him, of whom the poet sings

Whose faith hath centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself in form.

When it was written, it would have its worth as a warning against Rabbinic ingenuity, and curious intrusions into things, all as yet unknown, as men vainly puffed up by the mind of flesh, propounded doctrines about God and man, wholly unsupported by wise or complete observation of the facts of life, and were mere "cobwebs men had spun." And this certainly has been wholly an evil, the excessive use of a method of deduction, which has gone far ahead of induction, with a full or complete observation of the facts of life, which are ever being borne in by a growing and widening experience. Conclusions drawn from the past without a constant verification from the living present are ever liable to error.

And although, what is called, "Pragmatism" in our time, ignores the supreme embodiment of the truth in the real Absolute, yet it has this worth, that it presses upon us in true Baconian spirit, the consideration, that verification as a process de-

pendent on the new particulars being all made known. Hence the rebuke, which is contained in this portion, is not aimed at a true and worthy scientific inquiry, but only, and that rightly against premature deduction, and unfounded speculation. Thus viewed the rebuke would spring from the well-grounded conviction that the explanations of suffering then given were not wise or satisfactory, just because they did not meet all the facts of life even at that time known. If the "Yahveh" speech be taken as simply a refusal to accept the view of the Friends, or of that of Elihu, it is of great meaning, and should be at once accepted. On the other hand, it will lose all its value, if it be regarded as, in the Name of God, a condemnation of the endeavour of the human spirit to know more. Rightly enough the adequacy of Jewish thought, with its imperfect categories, to deal with the problem of suffering is called in question. On the basis of accepted views, and current preconceptions this problem was deemed insoluble, and in this we agree with the writer of this speech.

What, however, the author of the "Job" speeches was doing, was to call in question just these very views, and preconceptions. Such an effort seemed blasphemous to many, as the demand for a new valuation always seems to those, who are wedded to the old. But when "no less an authority than Yahveh," is made to vouch for these views, then comes in a great danger to what is vital in the faith. If, as has so often been un-

wisely done, Church authority throws its shield over the *status quo* in belief, as something final, the Church not only endangers itself, but also some valuable truth for which it contends.

A rebuke of any present view, which really calls for a new advance, with fuller knowledge, and better conceptions, is always significant and valuable, as it closes the past, and opens another and a new chapter in the future.

It is this, chiefly, which we would take as the meaning of the retraction, which is made to follow the rebuke. The sufferer is represented as withdrawing his statement, which had been made in ignorance of the nature of God. The writer is here concerned that man should not find fault with God, or cavil with His ways in Providence, a concern of the highest importance, indeed, to all, who would worship the Most High. What, however, is not sufficiently kept in mind, is that the attack is not so much levelled at God, but at the ways, in which He had been conceived as being, and acting. If only God's righteous ways of acting had been known, then sounds of protest would never have been heard, and that protest can only be removed in one way, even by the taking away of the ground, on which it had been based. Nothing can be more deplorable, than irreverent ways of speaking about what is felt to be the highest and holiest in man's soul, but an eager effort must be always made to discover the reason for this, and so end it in the best, and quickest way possible. Mere rebuke here, or some

manifestation of authority will avail nothing in the long run, though for the moment some impression may have been made. The unveiling of power, as vested in the supreme God, may seem to crush, but unless there comes conviction, there will yet be again a burst of protest, for it has not been really met ;—again the old flames of anger, damped down, but not extinguished, will blaze forth. A sudden appearance of God, even if possible, will not bring lasting peace, unless that theophany goes right to the heart of the matter in dispute, and gives inward satisfaction. The sufferer, who find his chief trouble in not being able to understand God's ways, must be dealt with sympathetically, so that he may have some insight into the method, in accordance with which the world is moving on.

To the writer this implies a power co-equal with God, the Creator, on the part of man, and as this is wanting, the claim must be disallowed. Man must be silent, and say nothing ; he cannot arrogate to himself the power or place of God ? he must lie low in the dust, and feel himself of no account. The retraction thus viewed does not contain a confession of sin, but a withdrawal of opinions uttered, with an acknowledgment of disqualification to form them. Here there is not what we regard as repentance, but only a declaration of ignorance, when "Job" is regarded as speaking as he did. Now he knows better, and he will not speak at all. He is made to say that his former views were based on hearsay, and tradition,

and not on the clear vision now possessed of the greatness of God, as seen by the eye, in the works of creation. "Acquiescence in nescience" is called for, and a lowly worship of a Creator, who is almighty, and whose ways are past finding out. This is conceived as man's supreme duty. In this may we not find an anticipation of modern agnosticism, with its silent worship at the altar of an unknown, and unknowable God?

It is always important, as we have already pointed out, not to read into any passage more than it contains. This rule has not been observed by all here. The teaching of the Voice from the Whirlwind, or theophany, has certainly been exaggerated, when "Job" is made to attain unto "some high state of resignation, which flows from an excess of pain, and a complete inability to make anything of it at all." The problem, as it met the Buddha, is not here, and so it cannot in any sense be said to be solved as it was by him. To Gautama existence itself was an evil, and things were but shadows. In this theophany the world is very great and splendid as a revelation of God's power and majesty, and in it man is to find his place in lowly reverence.

The translation of the Hebrew words has been variously given and this, perhaps, accounts for the views, which have been read into our text. The words, which we accept as meaning, "retract" and "withdraw," have been read as "resign" and "console myself" and so regarded as teaching that an actual person found comfort in resigning him-

self to the inevitable, and cultivating ethics, rather than philosophy. In this way, too, modern Positivism has been found here.

As the passage lies before us, we find no positive teaching, nothing of a final, or conclusive kind. Great questioning is, indeed, forbidden, but not on the ground of any distinct system having been reached by the author. None would have been more surprised than he, to find his words quoted as holding some full-fledged system of thought. On one great matter, he speaks, that of suffering, and that he regards as still unsolved, and he has no positive contribution to give towards that much-desired solution.

According to this writer, man has still to wait for fuller light before he can make any progress here. No further progress could be made with the light that then was shining. Every word more uttered would be foolish, and irreverent. Now the hand must remain on the closed lips. To speak without any fuller knowledge would only be to utter vain words.

A modern brilliant author, commenting on the teaching of the Speech from the Whirlwind, in which he sees man told to go on doubting, adds, as if scepticism was man's resting place—man is told to doubt “until at last, by some strange enlightenment, he may begin to doubt himself.” How sad if this result should come about!

CHAPTER VII

THE "ELIHU" SPEECHES, OR SUFFERING VIEWED AS THE METHOD OF CHASTISEMENT

IN the seven pieces, which we now come to deal with and which are grouped together as the speeches of "Elihu," we have in the main a distinct theory of suffering. It is this, that suffering is sent by God as a means of discipline, or chastisement to His own people, to wean them from their sins, and lead them on to higher and better things. This view stands by itself, as a clear contribution to the problem of suffering, and is propounded as an explanation of what had been causing so much concern. The view of the Friends is openly abandoned, and suffering is no longer regarded as penal, or retributive in the case of the good. It is clearly seen to have another, and distinct purpose. As we noticed in passing, some expression was given to this point of view by Eliphaz, only, however, to be looked at for the moment, not as his final opinion, but this view is now definitely taken up by Elihu, and made his own.

By general consent these speeches of Elihu are
The Book of Job.

now held to be the latest part of the book before us, and to state an opinion maintained by a later generation, a view found in many a psalm, and current among many still. While found in much of the best pietistic literature of Judaism, strangely enough it was not the accepted teaching of the Rabbis in the time of Christ. This is of interest, however, to us, who have been following the course of thought, that the view against which "Job" had been loudly lifting up his protest is given up by this writer, it being felt to be wholly inadequate to meet the facts of life.

The lateness of this portion is not only proved by the newness of the view adopted. It is also made abundantly evident from other considerations. For above all it is not found in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. Again it is worthy of note that "Elihu" has no place among the friends of "Job," who are spoken of as coming at the first to condole with him. And to what he has to say, there is no answer given in the book. The original drama seems to have had no place for this writer or his views.

His new view finds expression not only with great conviction, and in very forcible, and emphatic language, as coming from a writer who is determined to have his say, but also in language, which bears marks of the later day. For there are several Aramaisms to be found in the forms of the words used. It has been noted that the dignity, and beauty of expression seen in the original drama are largely wanting in this portion.

The age to which it belonged was characterised by being harder, and more stereotyped in its religious attitude, and much of this is found in what "Elihu" has to say. A certain prolixity of style, and an excessive dogmatism and self-confidence are manifest, and show still the inability of the writer to enter with sufficient sympathy into the deep-souled anxiety, which gave rise to the great questioning of "Job." There is also to be remarked a distinct advance in the observation of physical facts, and signs of a more developed doctrine of angels, as we shall immediately see. Probably references are made to the latest of the canonical books, viz., to *Chronicles*, and "Daniel," when in the writer's mind Manasseh, and Nebuchadnezzar are thought of as the great kings, who were caused to pass through special affliction for their spiritual good. As in the drama, however, the name for God is EL, and not the sacred name, Yahveh, as in the Prologue, and in the Speech from the Whirlwind.

The writer was not deterred from advancing his own solution by anything that had been said in that great Speech. Nay he makes this most important, and worthy demand, that as God is ever speaking to men, each successive age is under obligation to meet all conscientious inquirers, and as far as in it lies to supply an answer to their earnest minds. It is a true, and most valuable way of looking at things to say that God is the teacher of every age, so that each generation is under the necessity of giving expres-

sion to its own deep convictions as to truth. "Elihu" felt that he had something to say, which had not yet been said, at least in any adequate, and effective manner. He feels that "JOB" had not been fully answered, and he would therefore reproach all those, who had hitherto spoken, and especially for this, that they were now silent. In this way the true thought is expressed that an answer must be given to real doubt, and "Elihu" believes that he had that answer to give. We must now look at that answer, and see how far it goes to satisfy the mind, and meet the case, as it has been unfolding itself before us.

The explanation given by the Friends is abandoned, and in this way the contendings of "Job" are fully justified. That age was convinced that the sufferings of the righteous servant of God could not be accounted for on the view that they were sent as punishment. But this was a view of things, that was to die very slowly indeed. Though condemned by the best thought in Israel, splendidly shown to be inadequate by the words of "Job" and clearly denounced by our LORD, yet this theory had become so strongly entrenched in the very heart of the people, that only after long generations was it to be assigned to its own place. So powerful was it, just because of the half truth, which, as we have seen was lying at its very heart, the essential relationship between goodness, and happiness.

It is a loss, indeed, that such a writer as wrote the speeches of "Job" did not rise to write his

reply to what Elihu had to say, for this would have been most interesting, and instructive.

Again, however, we have the new wine requiring new bottles. "Elihu" comes forward as a fellow-man, declaring sympathy, but he, too, resents any too free utterance or apparent attack on the ways of Divine providence. While he could not for a moment imagine that God could be punishing His righteous servant, or His covenanted people, during all those troublous seventy years, he yet recognises that there was much need for moral improvement, and for a higher national goodness. Consequently he sees in all these sufferings a call of God for something better, and a means to that supreme end. No one, however good, can claim perfection, and no one can blame God, by in any way thinking that suffering, of which He is still conceived as the direct sender, can have no moral purpose. If only an effort was made to understand the divine way of working in life, and history, it is "Elihu's" profound conviction, that it would be found that God has this regular and systematic plan of dealing with man.

By suffering, he thinks, that God opens men's ears, speaks to them, and so makes known to them the requirements of His will, at the same time and by the same means, making them so obedient to Him, that they are saved from going down to the pit, or in other words from dying. A man is laid upon a bed of sickness by God. Pain is sent as God's messenger; it is a ministering angel. "The sorrows of death compass" the sufferer,

"and the pains of Sheol get hold upon him. He finds trouble and sorrow" (Psa. cxvi.).

Of the many angels, which at that time, in Jewish thought, were conceived as the necessary intermediaries between a transcendent God, so far removed, and so utterly out of direct touch with man, two are here mentioned. The one is Death's angel, or the angel of affliction, who is sent to bring man by means of sickness or bereavement to tremble as it were on the very brink of the grave. Thus was man by suffering sore made to realise the need of greater holiness, and to learn that only in a pure and holy life could he enjoy fellowship with God. This first angel having done his work, another, and a second one, a veritable daysman, chief among the thousands of God, is now conceived as appearing to complete that work. It is the function of this angel to explain the great benefit of suffering, as a means of deliverance, as a ransom, whereby the sufferer is brought back again to life, and can henceforth live in newness of life, in the enjoyment of a bright and happy experience.

It had been made matter of complaint that God had not come and put an end to pain and suffering. To this, answer is given in this way. That of which complaint is made is just God's way of dealing with men; it is the one way, and there is no other, by means of which He accomplishes this high blessing of bringing men into His fellowship here, and so giving to them the only life that is worth having or living.

It is worthy of the most careful attention, that

in the writings of the Old Testament the emphasis is laid upon the life here as the sphere, and the opportunity of highest communion with God Who is our life. The future, after death, was dwelling in the gloomy shade of Sheol; it was here, therefore that man must live, if he was to have any true life at all. An immortality with joy, and gladness had not yet entered into the mind of man. All this is clear from such a psalm as that of Hezekiah, as given to us in Isa. xxxviii. 15-31, or in the two psalms xvi. and cxvi. The king of Jerusalem, restored from a bed of sickness thanks God for prolongation of days, and just because in the grave, *i.e.*, in Sheol, he will not see the Lord. And looking upon his time of trouble he said that it was for his peace, that he had had great bitterness. Thus also we find the psalmist saying that "before he was afflicted he went astray, but now he kept Thy law." In this way the pious sufferer recognises the worth of suffering for his own life. All the trouble through which he had gone had been of the nature of a timeous warning. He had been at the gates of death, had even seen death's porter, to quote his striking expression, or

The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds.

But now brought back, he feels himself strengthened by sorest trial, so that with a truer love, a purer faith, and a better hope he might serve his great deliverer. Now his heart is glad, his tongue rejoices, and his flesh can rest in hope.

God has not given His beloved over to Sheol, nor allowed him to see the pit. With the new and better vision of God, which he had obtained through the time of trial, as he then gazed into the depths of undoneness and emptiness, he now sees the path of life, realising that in the conscious sense of the divine presence there is fulness of joy, and in His right hand pleasures that can never pass away.

It is this truth that Elihu emphasises here in his second piece where he deals with the divine method, in chap. xxxiii. 1-31. The restored saint recalls his sins, and sees that they were depriving him of the highest life, as they were leading him farther from God. From them suffering resulted, and as he discovered the meaning of it all, he is made to realise that God sends suffering for a time really to save from death, and bid him for many more days enjoy the gladness of the light.

On this view of things it fails to be remarked that suffering does not always produce this most desirable result. As we look around upon human life there is manifest proof on every side that pain and suffering "unhappily more often fails to teach, or to subdue. Often it hardens or perverts." If then pain works, as in many obvious cases it does, only evil results, "some other source and reason must be found for the pain, than the moral benefit it visibly brings the sufferer. In his "Christmas Eve" Browning emphasises this point of view, as he says,

"Tis the taught already, that profit by suffering.

To use suffering aright implies an attitude of soul to God. The lowly and pious soul, already inclined to God, and ever willing to hear His voice can act as a loving child, treat God as his heavenly Father, and so profit much by all the sad events of time. But the soul that is not thus disposed will only kick against the pricks, and go from bad to worse, as Isaiah seemed to feel was just what Jerusalem was at his time doing. Revolt only seemed to be the results of the heavy blows that were falling upon them (chap. i. 5). And although in the piece, which forms the sixth (chap. xxxv. 15–xxxvi. 21) Elihu still presses the view that the aim of suffering is disciplinary, not coming in anger, but only for man's good, he recognises that it is not always rightly used, and so from pain a good result does not come. Sometimes suffering seems to bring about the desired end. And here the cases of Nebuchadnezzar, and Manasseh may be referred to, but cases of other kings might be quoted who passed through affliction, without learning obedience. Hardness and callousness in many lives followed upon suffering, so that suffering by itself is not the cause of the wished-for contrition, and penitence. Justice, however, is not done to this consideration, for immediately the argument is resumed, that sorrow serves a high, and holy purpose among men. And the concluding statement contains a strong appeal to man to choose suffering, rather than to remain in wrong-doing.

In the third piece, found in chap. xxxiv. 1–13,

there is a declaration made that there is no man free from sin, and so all men require either punishment or chastisement. In no way can the righteous character of God be called in question. Thus the hypothesis that lies at the basis of the original drama is put on one side at once. The claim that even the accepted servant of God is good is not allowed to pass unchallenged. Here again there is obviously a different standpoint, and it is felt that even Israel required a discipline of sorrow, and had to pass through purging fires, in order to walk more closely with God. At the heart of the Universe there must be perfect justice.

In this way we notice how "Elihu" insists upon the connection between sin and suffering. He admits that the Friends had held a narrow and imperfect view in finding in all suffering a punishment for sin, because some suffering is not punishment, but chastisement. He however, with them still connects suffering with sin, and has no place in his mind for the sufferings that according to the contention of "Job" manifestly fall upon the righteous. Not yet is this great truth seen that much of the suffering in the world is suffering voluntarily taken upon themselves by the good for the sake of others. The dominant thought is that suffering is something sent by God, and for wise ends. "Elihu" is thus concerned above all things to maintain the divine supremacy. He does not explain in any complete or satisfying way the suffering of the good; and so he does

not meet the problem of our book. That problem still awaits a true answer.

The fourth piece in chap. xxxiii. 31–xxxiv. 14–37, is also characterised by an eagerness to remove all suspicion of injustice from the rule of God. In a difficult verse to translate, man is warned against in any way dictating to the Almighty, and the writer can only invoke the sorest punishment on any “Job,” who says anything at all against God.

In the fifth, and seventh pieces there is a manifest tendency to fall back on the teaching of the “Voice out of the Whirlwind.” For in them “Elihu” would impress man with the greatness, and sublimity of the works of God in nature, which always call for adoration. He warns against the danger of neglecting God, and of failing to submit to Him without question. Though he has said so much about the ways of God, and has spoken with so much confidence as to His great remedial purpose in sending suffering, he comes at last somewhat inconsistently, and as if his view did not give him complete satisfaction, to declare that of the Supreme nothing can be known. His power must be admitted, however we may fail to explain His ways. It is here again seen how dogmatists like Zophar, and “Elihu,” after they have had their say, and not completely met the difficulties raised, call for reverential silence, and restrain all further questioning. It would have been better, if they had taken their own advice, and themselves

said less. Had they done this, men would have been more ready to obey their exhortation.

When some emphasis is laid on the consideration that human sin cannot affect God, and only harms and hurts man himself in its consequences, we must be on our guard against the old false view, that would make God indifferent to what affects man. Words in the fifth piece require to be received with due qualification. For surely if man sins, or does what is right, God is really concerned. Whatever makes for the weal or woe of His creatures must affect a God, who is love, rather than power. Hence if we have a worthy conception of God, indifference can never be predicated of Him. It is true that He causeth His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust, but this He does in no manner of indifference to the moral character of men. Most undoubtedly His whole heart is in everything that makes for the welfare of His creatures, and for perfect righteousness in the world, that He is ever bringing nearer the state in which He would have it be in order and in beauty great. His purpose must be good, and any fear as to what He will do is wholly out of place. A fuller and worthier look out on life, than that which once prevailed, will enable us to think better of God, and to learn that events affect not individuals alone, but many others, nay, the universe itself, in which God is concerned. Thus any continuance of

wrongdoing is a matter of deep concern both to God and man, as it threatens all belief in a Moral Order in the world, and even in God Himself. Hence if we would think truly of God we must see that all the resources of the divine are ever being called forth for the prevention of what is evil, for the cessation of what is wrong, and are actively at work on the side of all that makes for true progress and advancement. Most certainly it is His aim that

Light and life wax perfect, even through night and death.

There is here a moral issue at stake, and that must lead to God Himself suffering most really and intensely in and with man. In a moral universe any kind of indifference either on the part of God or man is not to be allowed to come into our thought at all. It cannot agree with the attributes of God, and on man's part it is wholly to be condemned. In some high and splendid manner God must be conceived as devising measures to end all evil, that emerges in the great onward movement of things, and to be actively on the side of all those men, and methods working in this great direction. But as this world is one of moral freedom, the operation of God must be thought of as in perfect harmony with moral conditions, and in no way as coming by the way of any kind of compulsion. This is wholly impossible, nay inconceivable.

This higher view of God, which thinks of Him

taking deepest interest in His creatures, goes alongside of a better view of man, which sees his truest glory in his taking a very real interest in his fellows around him. If undue emphasis is laid upon suffering as coming, or being sent by God to man for his moral improvement, as has sometimes been done, an obstacle is placed in the way of man taking active, and speedy steps for the removal of the causes of disease. There is no doubt that the incoming of many great and splendid medical and sanitary reforms, which in our modern days have so manifestly prevented disease and diminished human suffering, were delayed by the prevailing opinion that sickness came as a divine chastisement, which had to be borne submissively by the sufferer. If, however, it is seen that both man and God find their truest function in the lessening of every kind of pain, then highest impetus, with all the enthusiasm, that true religion ever supplies, will be given to every humane and philanthropic movement among men. Then it will be found that the man is most godlike and divine, who is doing the most for the ending of all that blights, and darkens God's fair world, and he most unlike God, who does or perpetuates anything that produces harm. Religion is not a merely speculative attitude of the soul toward the world, but an active crusade to bring it ever nearer what it should be. It is really a helping of man, and a bringing on of that time, that golden age,

When ever blue the sky shall gleam,
And ever green the sod,
And man's rude work deface no more
The paradise of God.

The view of God that lies behind the teaching of "Elihu" is the same that is found in the teaching of the Friends. There is no recognition of God working through second causes. All that comes to pass comes directly at His behest. Suffering, like any measure of prosperity, comes directly and immediately from His hand. Thus there seems to be an appearance of what is arbitrary, and wholly unaccounted for, in life. There is no connection of events made with any preceding cause, or any antecedent. The trouble comes suddenly, as a bolt out of the blue, and no one can see how it comes. It is the doing of God, and that is all that can be said about it. So it was thought in the olden times.

In the old poems of the early days, which gave their rich material to Homer, and his successors, the gods are conceived of as doing everything. Punishment or salvation lay in their supreme arbitrament. And so, too, in the oldest narratives of the Old Testament. When *e.g.*, a mighty Pharaoh disobeyed a divine ultimatum, presented by one of the servants of the Most High, the plagues that followed, were regarded as coming from God in a direct manner, as the punishment of that defying of the will of God. No attention was given to any of the surrounding circum-

stances, or historical conditions of the time. All that may have come in between the act of disobedience, and the devastating plague, whether in time or circumstance, was ignored, and the connection is at once made between these two things. The authority of the messenger was supposed in those days to be guaranteed by some open sign of the divine displeasure upon the evildoer.

Thus it was that when troubles great were reported as falling upon Job it was natural that his friends should at once come to the conclusion, that he had incurred the anger of heaven. His goodness is all forgotten, and under the influence of current views, no question is asked about the causes that might have brought his troubles upon him. No effort is made to look into the circumstances, or trace the antecedents. To the friends there was here a manifest expression of the anger of God, and to "Elihu" it was clear that the suffering had come for a great remedial end. We now find that the sufferings of men can be accounted for to an increasing extent, and that many things, which men in their days of ignorance traced to God, can be attributed to causes under the control of man himself. Many sore diseases, and evil social conditions, which are now being bravely grappled with, were once, alas ! often by those unaffected by them, regarded as a judgment of God upon the sufferers, many of whom were better than those, who were exempt from them. And sufferers were told by such persons to take their troubles in a right and reverent spirit ! Surely a worthier

attitude to the sufferer, and a more reverent attitude toward God is being taken, when every sore disease, and every evil social condition is being carefully studied with a view to discovering the causes, and to the effectual removing of these, as speedily as possible.

The former view that suffering was a necessary thing, and a permanent factor in human life, is thus passing away. More and more the attribution of trouble and pain to God as its cause and sender, is ceasing, as men are finding out more of the facts of life. Some, commenting upon the words of Christ that we "have the poor always with us," have surely misunderstood and misinterpreted His thought, when they explain His word as if by this He meant to say that the poor would be always with us. For are we not learning that poverty is capable of being prevented by wise methods of living, and by better social arrangements? In the same way in view of the sad fact that there has been so much suffering in the past, some men have in a very hopeless, and despairing spirit come to the conclusion, that suffering must ever be, as something essentially bound up with all human life.

But now the conviction is deepening that the amount of suffering can and ought to be diminished, and that this is in accordance with the will of God. The great exhortation of St. James is beginning to take hold on the heart and conscience of men, when he said, "Be not deceived. Every good giving and every perfect gift cometh from

God, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow caused by turning." Much that we blamed the gods for, just as much that we called upon them to do, we now see to be lying at our own door. We can prevent the evil, for which they were blamed, and we can do the good we called on them to do, if only we rise in our God-given strength, and love, to do our duty. From God can never come anything that hurts or harms. In the world-conquering faith of Christianity evil, sickness, and distress, are things ever more and more to be heroically dealt with, and finally ended. In this crusade against all causes of sickness, and distress, in the effort to put an end to them, much suffering may be entailed on noble and brave souls, but as we shall have occasion to point out, such suffering is the very highest glory of humanity, in connection with which there is no cause for tears.

In thus dealing with the problem of suffering we are at one with "Elihu" in seeking to maintain a worthy view of God, and to prevent men saying hard things about Him, Whom all should honour, for He is their life indeed, and their only joy, and strength. We would think worthily of God, Who daily loads Himself with our burden, and surrounds us with all high and holy influences, and in no way interferes with the chiefest glory of our moral being, which is yet our greatest responsibility, even our freedom of action. But we shall have to abandon the old view of a God continually interfering with His own laws or interposing in

the course of things, and adopt one, which we shall find to be more in harmony with a truer conception of the Universe, as taught to us by the best science available, and within our reach.

From another point of view, and this, too, a distinctively modern one, the teaching of "Elihu" is open to criticism. In former days the individual was regarded too much as standing alone, and by himself, in his separateness, and isolation from all others. On this we shall have more to say in our following chapters, but here we cannot pass from what "Elihu" has to say about the disciplinary nature of suffering, without remarking upon the necessity of viewing men as component parts of a great, throbbing society, and so bound up one with another. Suffering was viewed as coming for the good of the individual, and the other point of view was ignored as to the benefit of society from the suffering of the individual. What may be a loss to one person may be a gain to another, and thus it is of importance to consider how things affect not the individual alone, but others around. A "Job," or a nation, may, nay, indeed did in former times, look at things from their own more limited and restricted standpoint, and thus on considerations of selfishness judge events. A wider and a more unselfish outlook had yet to be taken. And it had yet to be considered how suffering might play a part in the great world, beneficial on some large scale, and really in the long run benefiting the individual also. The modern view has been put thus, "our very right and wrong depends upon

the question, whether it is a thought of ourselves, or of others, that moves us." "Elihu" would have us view pain as it affects ourselves, while, on the contrary, we should view it as it affects others. And the end of all events is the good of the whole in which, doubtless, the good of the individual, his efficiency, not necessarily his joy, is finally secured. If one fixes his eye too exclusively on his own happiness, a pessimistic conclusion is very likely; if on the wider whole, he may see his own suffering working out highest ends.

It is a great truth that no man liveth to himself alone, and so he finds and saves himself, just as he lives for God and others. And he who lays hold on this view of life, feeling that he cannot rise, or fall, without others rising or falling too, will entertain the highest thought of God. He will see that the great God liveth not unto Himself, and is ever seeking to bring man into fellowship with Himself. Suffering will be the means of accomplishing this divine end. Thus we reach toward a better view than that which "Elihu" was able to give.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROGRESS OF THOUGHT AS TO THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING, IN GREEK TRAGEDY, AND JEWISH PROPHECY

SO far as we have gone, the presence of suffering in the world has been a great cause of complaint, if it remains unexplained, against the Moral order of the universe. It has been regarded as a bad thing, and strenuous efforts were made to explain it, so as to vindicate the ways of God. Suffering, and loss have been looked at in and by themselves, in and by their effect on individual men, and regarded as blots on the fair story of man and God's relation to him. To some minds a theoretic world, no doubt, presented itself in which there was no pain or suffering at all. It did not occur to them that this, instead of being a mistake, and therefore, a reflection on God, might yet be found to possess highest meaning, and truest worth. Not yet, however, had any deep moral significance been found in it, and life seemed embittered by its presence. But it was soon to be seen that in a world of free agents, and in a universe, slowly advancing, "heaven's gift

must take earth's abatement," and in the very nature of things pain and suffering must come in, not as a defect, but as the true accompaniment of the onward movement.

The simpler, and more superficial theories, which explained suffering as a punishment, or as something sent by God as chastisement for a man's good, were felt inadequate to meet all the facts of life, and there was a groping after a fuller view.

When these facts of experience are looked at, it is seen that there are connections between things, and that this world is not governed in any arbitrary way, but has law and order at its very centre. When by a careful diagnosis the facts are dealt with, the veil of what seemed mystery is raised, and some close, and intimate relationship is seen to exist among the various events of life, and suffering as a warning bell simply, but most effectively, calls attention to what has to be carefully examined, and that without prejudice, and preconception. Bacon, the master of modern science, laid down this maxim, that "the question whether anything can be known is to be settled, not by arguing, but by trying."

Suffering need not be exaggerated, even though it be sore and severe, a great and a terrible blow, but it must be calmly looked at. Of course, this cannot always be done by the sufferer himself in his hour of trouble; it must be dealt with sympathetically by another, not perhaps personally affected, but touched by what makes all mankind

kin, that common humanity, that is our glory, and high responsibility. If he, who suffered once, deals with the sorrow, it can be only, when he has surmounted it, and so able calmly to survey it on its many sides.

The mind, as in a pure mirror, must go on to discover all the facts, and so find out just how, and why, in this case, and in these circumstances the catastrophe came.

Such an inquiry should be undertaken, at least in its first stages, apart from any consideration as to God, or His relation to the world. If this is not done, a certain view of God, and His working is apt to be superimposed on our observation of life, and so to colour what we see. Nothing can do so much harm to the progress of knowledge, as Plato long ago declared, as a wrong or unworthy view of the gods, and their operations. At first in a true and scientific spirit, we should deal, not with the great First Cause, which is beyond sense observation, but with those second causes, which lie around us every day, those real means, by which everything moves on to its goal and end, and which it should be the object of all scientific men to know, and to set forth in the laws of their being, and movement.

The facts in their isolation must first be recorded. Then their relations one to another must be clearly perceived. By and by, as the wider and fuller sense of these relationships fills the mind, they will be found to lead up to God, and in his way a very much better, and

truer view of God and His relationship to the world will be reached, as from these His lower works, we rise to Him, Who made all things, and Whose glories shine, where'er we turn, as Milton realised, and told us.

In olden times particular theories of a divine impact, or of direct interference on God's part with His own ways of working, kept men from dealing with the facts by themselves alone. As we have said, it was the idea that God had sent his suffering as a punishment that roused the protest of "Job." This view prevented the men of his time from looking at the facts of life from any other standpoint.

Reason thinks of things as a whole, and it thinks of them together. Thus it banishes all appearance of caprice, and accident, and discovers law and order in what at first seemed only chaotic and confused. In this way gradually, a full comprehension of God, as a God of law and order is reached. Then all partial views pass away, and man attains the conception of things as a perfect whole. "For all the events, which surround us, are but different parts of a single scheme, which is permeated by one glorious principle of universal, and undeviating regularity." To see this, and to have a hand in this great work of all "things working together for good" is to come into harmony with God, and all efforts at making things better are not a flying in the face of Providence, but rather an acting on its own lines, according to God's will.

In the book, which we have been studying no final or satisfying view of suffering has been given, but, as we have seen, a number of contributions have been made towards helping the inquirer on to a truer one. A clear realisation of the inadequacy of these explanations emphasises, in the strongest manner, the necessity of the task, which we have set before our mind, even to make some endeavour to find some satisfying solution for the existence of suffering, and so to see it in its true nature and meaning, in this great world, in which all through law and order prevail.

When the period passed, in which the great Homeric poems were received without criticism, and sung without question, there began the time of thought in Greece, in which was born the splendid cycle of Tragedy, associated with the three outstanding names of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*. These great thinkers felt themselves constrained to deal with the examples of suffering innocence which were supplied in the Homeric legends. Abundant material lay to hand in the story of the famous Priam, King of Troy, or in that of Ulysses, and his wanderings, imposed upon him by Neptune in his revenge, or in that again of *Œdipus*, with its tragic events. But the wonderfully touching gallery of pictures of noble women, who suffered in innocence, such as *Alcestis*, *Antigone*, and *Iphigenia*, is here of supreme interest, in the sublime, and pathetic struggle of the human spirit. In the *Odyssey* suffering is spoken of as the lot of mortals, and

freedom from suffering the portion of the immortal gods. Hence we must not blame the gods, but rather accept with patient resignation, whatever comes.

Against this view of things reason in *Aeschylus* rebels, as it seeks for some better way of looking out on life, and gives forcible utterance to the demand of the spirit within. A reconciliation of the vast conflicts of the soul is sought, and "the strong passions of men are seen seeking gleams through their stiff conventions." A new Greece was emerging in resistance to the force of Persian might, and in sympathy with this external development, if not its cause, the mind of man was "widening with the process of the suns."

Greek Tragedy was reshaping the world of thought. The mighty God of Olympus, who at first, in his treatment of Prometheus, is represented as being altogether against man, is seen in a more favourable light as thought advances, and lays hold upon the essential nature of truth. In the earliest drama sympathy with the suffering imposed by Zeus is withheld, and given to the sufferer, as one unjustly treated. Power seems alone to be seen, crushing its victim. But soon a deeper view is grasped, and in the power is seen a purpose of love, and so by suffering good is accomplished. The binding of Prometheus was after all not something dictated by power, but springing from love. And thus sympathy is in course transferred back to the supreme God.

Suffering, which in the beginning only calls forth protest, is in the final outcome acquiesced in, as a means of highest wisdom. The question as to the meaning of suffering is pressed, as it is felt to be something demanding an answer, something that will not allow itself to be put on one side. The poets feel themselves bound to give an answer and one ever clearer, and more satisfying to the human spirit. It is not admitted to be something inevitable, bound up in a mysterious way with life, but what must be understood, if man is to have peace and rest of soul. The purpose and meaning of it all must be sought out, and this searching out was not regarded as in any way blasphemous, or unworthy. It did not spring from any spirit of rebellion against the gods; nay, it was doing them a service in trying to show that they were actuated only by the best of motives in all their actions towards men. The mind was herein only trying to come into closer contact with reality, and remove out of the way all that had stood between man and God of error and misconception in the past.

The tragedians sought to find out what lay at the heart of the old stories. They differed from Shelley in this respect, that they really thought well of the gods, and were above all anxious to present them in a worthy manner to men so that their faith in them might not be destroyed as thought advanced. In their view a worthy idea of the divine lay at the basis of society. And in this they were beyond all question right. The

popular presentation of Zeus might be wrong. Zeus himself, however, could not be wrong. What he really was, and how he really acted, they had to discover.

Thus taking up the stories of Io, and her dreadful ordeal, ere she reached her proud and happy position at last, or that of Oedipus, they had to show that suffering was not something arbitrary, but of great worth. Oedipus, e.g., once enjoyed high honour in Thebes, and was held in high esteem, but to him came the terrific reverse, when his day was turned into night, and all his fortune overturned. What happened to the "Job" of the Old Testament happened to this Greek hero. At the close of "Oedipus Tyrannus" the prevailing impression is one of deepest gloom, but as he is seen passing through his sufferings, his old pride gives place to true humility and his old hardness to a new kindness and generosity. Soon he feels and gives expression to this sublime truth that

One soul working in the strength of love
Is mightier than ten thousand to atone.

However great the world of the gods may be, and however vast the concerns they have, yet the world of man is of highest worth, and man must have his say, and response must come to his anxious question. Man's lot may be trifling, and his sorrows no more than a grain of sand in comparison with the vastness of the world, and the concerns of the universe, yet that grain of sand has its place and worth. It cannot be ignored or

passed by on one side, as if it were of no account. In Faust, Mephistopheles makes light of the keen individual suffering, pointing out how many similar, if not how many much worse cases are daily occurring, but against this view that would depreciate the case of the individual, the sufferer makes his protest loud and strong.

"She is not the first to suffer!" you say.

Ah! This only intensifies the grief, as Faust exclaims in a burst of indignation. "Abominable monster! Not the first! O woe! woe! which no human soul can grasp, that more than one should sink into the depth of misery. The misery of this single one pierces to the very marrow of my life, and thou art calmly grinning at the fate of thousands." This want of sympathy was only to repeat what Tennyson calls the common commonplace,

And vacant chaff well meant for grain,
That loss is common to the race.

There the suffering is, and it must be borne, without question. But war was waged with the view that suffering came either as an arbitrary infliction, or as in any way bound up with life as a necessity, and an insoluble mystery.

In Greece the conflict appeared between a popular creed, founded on tradition, and glorified by splendid poetry, and the craving of the awakened mind for a better, fuller one, more in harmony with a more adequate interpretation of experience. The rebellion of Prometheus was against the con-

ception of Zeus as a tyrant god, and though at first his suffering seemed all so strange, and almost unbearable, when it was seen that it was in the interests of mankind, it could be borne without complaint. This could be said,

Behold! What I a God, endure from Gods !
My sin,—to save mankind.

In such a great cause Prometheus was willing to “serve the rock” to which he was bound. God truly conceived could never be the enemy of human progress, nor in any way jealous of man’s advance in knowledge, or power. To bring about this end, suffering may be voluntarily undertaken, even though it be very great,

On men a boon bestowing,
I wrought sorrow for myself, worse than expected.

Thus Æschylus made a great advance on the old view expressed in these lines,

Blood for blood, and blow for blow,
Thou shalt reap as thou dost sow,
Age to age with living wisdom
Speaketh thus to man.

Life was being shaken to its very centre, and we have the deep thoughts of an expansive and transitional time, as the mind passes from a moral chaos to a moral cosmos. Just as in “Job” we find the old proverbial maxims being called in question, so in the Tragedians

the simple, and more primitive views of Solon's time are being replaced. The bald and bare idea of God as a Being of power alone finds expression in the "Supplices" of Æschylus, but this is felt to be far from satisfying. Nay, God Himself appears as a suppliant. For God must be more, and better than power, if He is to remain the highest, and worthy of a place in human love and worship. The human spirit cannot think of itself as struggling blindly with fate, destiny, or Nemesis, but hopefully and successfully, as it is sure that God is in His own essential nature, what man most of all desires in his best moments and strivings. Man finds that he does not need to stand up against God, or make a claim upon Him, as if He were confronting him or at all opposed to his true interests. For this is true that "God is man's ancient friend." All that man wants, as he feels the need for it, he finds God grants. His consciousness of a claim, based upon his deepest nature, is also based upon what God is. Antagonism between the divine, and the human is felt to be wrong, and must disappear, as it gives place to a real reconciliation.

In a true self-assertion Greek thought came to find the prerogative of virtue, and in a true self-sufficiency man's high goal. Not yet, however, was it seen that man's best self was in harmony with the divine, or that God in a worthy way could become man, and dwell amongst men, so that they might behold His highest glory, even that of "grace, and truth." This fuller revelation

and unfolding of the divine, as the true human, had yet to come, when it was to be known that,

The name of God for awhile upon earth was man.

Looking at the ideals of suffering innocence in the noble women portrayed in Greek Tragedy, we can trace the growth of a better view of suffering, than was at first held.

Alcestis displayed a noble willingness to suffer for her husband, and this is recognised as having great worth, for he receives back in return the restoration of his beloved, even from death.

Antigone endures, nay, willingly, takes upon herself intense suffering in defence of the true pieties of home affection, and in defiance of a tyrannical power, which was threatening, and endangering all that was worth therein. Great, in consequence, is the place she holds in the esteem of Greece.

At first, Iphigenia, when demanded as a sacrifice, was an unwilling agent. Such a sacrifice seemed only to be asked for by a foolish superstition. But when we come to the last form of the story in Euripides, she is represented as voluntarily becoming a sacrifice, as she sees that it is for her people and country, that she is called to suffer. Here there is a going below the surface of a national legend, a surmounting of what is strange and mysterious in it, and the discovering that in this there is embodied the supreme truth that suffering may be a splendid service undertaken for the good of others.

That is to say, that the poet comes to this magnificent conception of the meaning and worth of suffering, and makes this as his contribution to the solution of the problem of the ages. The nobleness of Antigone's sacrifice must have redemptive value, and Iphigenia is made to say that she is dying for her country, "to which she belongs." Such an action is declared to be right in itself, and not to derive its worth from any outside source, such as custom, oracle, or maxim. If here we see an anticipation of what was to find its highest embodiment in the life and work of Christ, how much better is it than what has been said to be the rule of the game in the modern West, with its "competition and self-aggrandisement, without attention to the sufferings caused thereby to one's neighbours." Verily Greece could rise in judgment with this age, and condemn it, for it approved the teaching of its great Tragedians, while our modern capitals so often deny the whole genius of Christianity. Here, then, value is being put on sufferings and those the most severe, as a means of accomplishing some needed good. And thus love, not fate, is coming by degrees to be recognised as the eldest and best Goddess. The element of mystery is more and more passing away, in the writings of Euripides, from the minds of men, and more of sympathy is being felt for man, and the concerns of human life.

In the story of Io, with her wonderful sufferings, and degradation, we have the passing of one through a sevenfold heated furnace in order to

become the mother of the destined deliverer, the Hercules, who would free the bound Prometheus from his rock.

Once troubles had sprung in the most unaccounted-for manner from the opening of Pandora's box, and they all seemed so arbitrary, but they were being more and more understood and explained. Once they were inevitable, and irremovable, as it was said to Prometheus,

The woe of present evil shall oppress,
For he's unborn, who shall deliver thee.

But the deliverer was to be born, and the suffering was to be the means to that great end. The striking lesson was being taught and learnt, that suffering was learning indeed ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\thetao\varsigma \mu\acute{\alpha}\thetao\varsigma$), not incongruous with, or opposed to a moral order, but in closest and deepest agreement therewith.

When we pass to Plato, a splendid picture is given to us of the good man suffering, and this just because the perfect State had not yet come. This notable thinker sketched in never-dying lines the ideal Republic, in which man's highest good was to be realised, in which there was to be a complete subordination of all separate interests, the sacrifice of the individual, to the service of the whole. All unworthy views of the gods were to be kept out of the city, so that only the highest ideals might impress the youth. Perhaps the worth of the individual was not sufficiently emphasised by Plato, or shown to be really secured by the way of self-sacrifice. This was

the task, which had to be taken in hand by Aristotle, and the Stoics.

The supreme worth of the individual, on which in Jerusalem the Prophet Jeremiah was laying emphasis, amid the breaking up of all things held dear, was that which had to receive attention from the Stoics, and they had to lead the way to a notion of man, as independent of every outward thing, as self-dependent, of man as having supreme worth, which was to be an essential element in the higher teaching of Christ. But it had to be made clear, as Plato saw, that the individual detached, or as in any way separated from the living whole, of which he was a vital, and constituent member, had in himself no worth, or value. "For no man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." We have to avoid a false individualism, on the one hand, as we have on the other to avoid a crushing of the individual life by its absorption in the State. The distinct appreciation of each element in its own worth will lead to a surmounting of all opposition between them, and to a true reconciliation, in which each will be recognised.

Marcus Aurelius, that noble Stoic thinker, has so much of value, as he lays the greatest emphasis on the thought that man finds his happiness, not in things, or in the abundance of what he has, but in the attitude of his mind towards them. A proper standpoint here would prevent the complaint that comes from many, when outward possessions are withdrawn. It was, indeed,

the absence of this true standpoint that gave rise in olden time to the great protest, when "Job" lost what he had, and Jerusalem was carried into captivity. If the mind can use all life, and all that it has or brings as a means for the good of others, and the glory of God, outward things, whether present, or wanting, become wholly subordinate. When this condition of things is reached, there is a growth of a true character, which thinks not of its own things, but of the things of others, and in the good of others finds its own highest bliss.

Suffering comes then to be viewed, not from the individual's stand-point, as affecting himself, but from the standpoint of the whole. The individual's gain will be found in the gain of the whole, as the loss of the whole will also be his loss.

In the labours of a Buddha, and a Zoroaster, as in the Tragedies of Greece, and in the contendings of "Job," the world-wide movement of thought is seen, that supreme Zeit-geist, or Time spirit, that is ever at work among men. As already observed, Gautama did not perceive the moral worth of suffering, but viewed it as an evil, while Zoroaster sought for the solution of life's problems not in evolution, but in a transcendent sphere, tracing as he did the good to the Good Spirit, and the bad to the source of evil, in the rival of the Good. To him there was an imaginary antagonism in a supra-mundane world.

The very highest interest, in the progress of

thought among the Jews, attaches to the well-known passage in Isaiah liii. As to its date, it is probably later than the speeches of "Job," though, of course, much earlier than our book in its final form. In the sublime teaching of this passage, the high-water mark of Jewish thought is reached. It gives by far the best contribution yet given to the solution of our problem, and is, undoubtedly, a very full anticipation of the teaching of Christianity. For there is here given the ideal picture of the sufferer, who suffers not for any wrong, that he had done, but for that of others, as a vicarious sufferer. "He is despised, and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities."

Such a case of intense suffering, as "Job" represents, and which was the sad experience of Jerusalem in the sore captivity, is thus described, and in this way its reason is given. When the question is asked, as it was then being keenly asked, Why do the righteous suffer? it was at once, and clearly answered in these noble words, "They suffer for others." The trouble, which comes upon them is not sent in capricious, or arbitrary manner, as mysterious, or disciplinary, or a public demonstration of the staying power of the good man, but it is accepted as a vicarious, and substitutionary suffering whereby many are freed from pain. With full and distinct know-

ledge, then, the righteous servant of God can take up whatever suffering comes, and suffer voluntarily, meet it bravely, and bear it unmurmuringly, as he sees it to be the means of the deliverance of many. His stripes are their healing.

What a sublime lesson was thus taught to Israel at that time, and how helpful it would have been to them, in enabling them to endure their day of trouble! But how poorly and imperfectly was the teaching received! How few believed the message of the great prophet! Yet this was the seed, and germ of the final truth, and like all seed it had to die, and remain alone many days, waiting for the fulness of the time, when it would appear in its ripeness. For this is the law of all true life, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

In the Book of "Daniel" the sufferings of Daniel, and his three noble companions, as martyrs for the truth of God, illustrate the working of the new view of things. Clearly is it taught by their deliverance that God cares for those, who willingly surrender their lives, and all they hold dear for a true, and noble cause. The beautiful picture, drawn by a prophetic hand, of an Abraham, as he was feeling himself called upon to sacrifice his only son, and having that son restored to him, forecasts the teaching here, in its simple, and early form.

It is, however, never sufficient to have the thought of the truth, even in all the worth of

its inspiration; more is required. And that more is just the lodgment of the truth, in all its power, and effective working, in the whole outlook of a man's life. Until this time comes the truth remains, as the new wine ever demanding new bottles, the inner growing force causing unrest, until a better means of outward expression is found. The new truth has so to enter into, and permeate the whole experience of man, as to make all things new. Only in a new view of the universe can the new view of suffering find its place. The fact of suffering innocence, in this fuller Isaianic light, and with this new significance, had to make its own impression on the world's history, and in its own way.

This prophetic teaching, and the splendid contribution given by Greek thought, with all its fine anticipations, was as bread cast on the waters, which was to be found after many days. It was all to receive supreme expression in the life, and teaching of Jesus, and under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth to find ever more and more adequate interpretation down the Christian ages. For knowledge grows, even though at times the growth seems slow, and things, which at one time appeared so mysterious, or as only illumined, as by a passing flash of light, the happy possession, or experience of some great soul, in close touch with the centre of things in God, become the property of the many, as that divine light passes into their own souls too, and abides forever there. History is truly the divine education of the human

race, and in that education faith ever more and more gives place to knowledge, as misconceptions pass away, and a worthier view of the world, as it really is in itself, as God's world, is seen and grasped. When the great law of all life, in its ever-unfolding, and evolving process, from the lowest to the highest is understood, then the mind will find a complete satisfaction in what it knows of God, and His purpose. The demand of the human spirit for a more satisfying explanation of things, and especially of suffering, is manifest throughout all history. It has been a growing demand for a clearer setting forth of the Moral order of the universe, finding voice in "Job," in the Greek Tragedians, in the great religions of the world, and it is ever being more fully met, in advancing science, which is just the receiving of the sublime principles of truth, obtained in the long, and anxious travail of the ages, and their application more fully to the needs of life, and action. That this demand would yet be fully met was the assured and well-grounded hope of all, who laboured in the pursuit of truth.

Looking back on the early beginnings we feel it true that,

A good man, through obscurest aspirations,
Has still an instinct of the one true way.

That one true way the human spirit ever follows, and as it pursues its onward path, it knows more and more of the foretastes, and forecastings of the perfect day.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING AS VIEWED IN MODERN DAYS

IT is our purpose to reserve what we regard as the distinctly Christian view of suffering, and its meaning and function in the world, to our last and closing chapter. In this chapter we would seek to state those more modern conceptions, seen both in poetry and in science, which are making for the fuller acceptance of this Christian view, and so helping, as we think, for the wider and more complete diffusion of the truth here. When this shall be recognised, then truly will be removed out of the midst of men the one great stumbling-block to a fairer, and clearer conviction that in the world there is a splendid Moral order, at the very heart of which God lives, moves, and has His being, as a God, Whom all His children can worship, and with love adore. For the great soul of the Universe must be just and good.

The important mark of modern views of science, and thought, is that men think of things together, and as one great, and splendid whole. Things are

felt not to be broken up and separate members, but all constituent parts, articulated together, of one living, breathing organism. This gives us a very much better, and worthier view of nature, than was held in the olden days, and implies a higher conception of God, and His relation to His creatures.

When as yet science had made little progress in the discovery of law and order in the universe, there used to prevail, as we have seen, a very mechanical and external way of thinking about God, and nature, a way of thinking, which remained up to the eighteenth century, and was seen not only in the attacks upon our holy Faith, but also in the replies then made. God was regarded as a great, and omnipotent Power, endued with the most beneficent attributes, but working upon the world as wholly from the outside, as a mechanician works upon a machine. Creation, and Providence were regarded as movements of God from a far away and distant place, above and beyond. The attribute of transcendence was almost exclusively applied to Him, and He was not realised as a Spirit here and near, manifesting Himself as a Spirit in and through His creatures, and His works, as well as in His great creative activities in the world. The tendency was to confine, and restrict these activities to special moments, and extraordinary or miraculous interpositions. The presence of God was apt to be missed in the ordinary, and regular operations of the world. Thus an element

of mystery surrounded, and shrouded the divine, and made it impenetrable to the human spirit.

It also followed that there was an opposition, a dualism, with a great chasm, between man and God, in human thought. It became difficult to understand the relation of the natural and the divine, and hence there grew up the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. Men's minds seemed all unable to think of the one as manifesting itself in the other. The relation of God to the world was almost entirely conceived as something of an arbitrary, and unexplainable kind, so that men could sing,

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.

The continuance of suffering innocence, and flourishing wickedness presented an insoluble problem to those, who so conceived of God in His working. On the supposition that God was One that interfered, and intervened at His own will in and with His own established universe, the question at once arises, Why did He not do so in some clear, distinct, and complete manner? He was good and all-powerful, and could intervene. And yet He did not do so. Why did He not reward the good, and punish the wicked speedily? When, however, ideas of law and order and of a reign of law began to be received, then thoughts of purpose and reason, end and goal, as in a world of free-will agents, learning themselves to act in accordance with reason, and

with purpose, came more readily into men's thinking. And God then began to be viewed, not so much as a God of power and wisdom, but much more, and much rather as a Person of a moral and a spiritual kind, working by spiritual influences, in and through His own wisely established laws, both in what is called nature, and in the region of man's moral freedom, and that towards one great, and perfect consummation, in an end of highest wisdom. Nature and history, in all their course, began to be viewed as under the categories of process, evolution, and advancing development. The literature of the new age it has been truly remarked, "is instinct with the sense of a divinity within the world." The natural and the supernatural are not conceived of as two separate worlds, each with its own laws, and principles, wholly different from the other. Once it was thought that in the natural the law of causation prevailed, while the supernatural was the realm of moral freedom in which God works. The best thought removes this chasm, and sees God at work all the time and in everything. The so-called law of causation is His law, and in it He works by His own free will. All the laws of nature, as they are called, are but the wise methods, which He employs in sovereign wisdom. The alternatives, which once were common are felt not to be exclusive after all. For even "the real and ideal, good and evil have no existence apart, and are mere abstractions." That is to say that there must be

something of the ideal in the real already, and something of the good in the bad, if we are to evolve out of the real anything higher, or to bring out of the bad what is better. There can be no gap at all. Things are all in the making, as old Heraclitus taught us; they are becoming. There is nothing in things by themselves essentially wrong, and the principle in them is the good at work. "Knowledge and morality do not seek to bring a new order of existence into being." They aim at discovering what is, that is God's order in the world.

And in man we find what is the law of the whole, even a pursuing of ends, great and small. He is indeed the consummation of things, and all the way up to him from the lowest and most rudimentary forms, this law is seen, that all is making for its end. Would we then find the significance of any one single thing, we must look at it not alone, but in its connection, for significance "belongs not to that which stands isolate, and singular," but to things together, in their relations. And so nothing is understood until we know its place in a process. Here on earth is God's great kingdom, in which His plan is unfolding itself before our eyes, and as the poet bids us believe all the universe is love woven, and all things are treading the love way. Nature is not godless, nor is God unnatural, "Nature is not dead brass at all, but alive and miraculous" as Carlyle cried in his strong prophetic way.

Things thus cease to be viewed in or by themselves. One sublime whole is thought of, and things, and events are regarded as means, and moments, steps and stages in an onward movement. Details begin to be surmounted, and are seen, not as having worth or meaning in themselves, but as having worth as having a place, and a service in and for the whole. There is felt to be a working together of all things, persons, and events towards an end of supreme value, the perfect good of the whole, by which God will be glorified, and man and nature crowned indeed. The thought of a birth, and a beginning, with all that that involves of pain, and travail is laid hold of, the glad joy and worth of something done and accomplished filling the mind. Men see

A purpose gleaming through
The secular confusions of the world.

and seeing this, they already see with other eyes. God is not imprisoned in the universe, for it is His own, nor are men, imprisoned in the actual, for purpose in man's life, and much more in that of God, leads to the rising above what is, and the making of something else, and something better. An ideal floats before the mind, and that, believed in, allows a free, and glad working.

The world is still God's, as in the earliest, and simplest thinking, but in a much better, and clearer sense. God is felt to be in it as a great

force, and holy influence, freely and fully manifesting Himself, in an ever-increasing development of His own wise purpose, towards the fulfilment of which all things are tending. Thus viewed, the whole course of nature, life, and history is ever essentially on the side of virtue, and goodness, and its culmination is the perfected whole. Nature would be no longer conceived apart from God, but in all its onward throbbing movement, as bearing in its breast a great secret purpose, which it is, not blindly, but with a deepening consciousness, carrying on to a splendid goal. The progress may be slow, but it is sure, for though "heaven's gifts must take earth's abatements," yet God is at "the roaring loom of life, and weaves for us the garment, we see Him by," through which He speaks to every open ear by His ten thousand voices, and in ever clearer form shows His ways in all things around.

When nature is conceived apart from God, or by itself, with the thought of a wise purpose, that of God, being excluded, it is spoken of as morally indifferent. Emphasis is laid on such facts suggested by a surface observation, that,

Bullets in battle do not the wicked select.

Nature appears as "red in tooth and claw," and is said to "grind out good, and grind out ill," to have "no purpose, heart, or will." The sun shines on the good, and the evil, while the rain descends on the just, and on the unjust. Thus

has it been put in well-known lines by Matthew Arnold,

Streams will not curb their pride,
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightning go aside,
To give his virtues room.

The error here lies in the isolating of events, and in looking at them in, and by themselves alone, without any thought of end or purpose being served by them. Yet this is what science teaches loud and clear, that all is one, and all is a whole. In each part, and in every single event an end is enshrined, even in lowliest cell, an end at last to be completed in the long process of the ages. Thus "all must have reference to the ensemble of the world, and its compact truth." Each has this to say that it belongs to that whole, which God has planned.

In this way we are led to think not of any one part in its aloofness, or of any one moment, as if it stayed alone, but much rather of the connection of each part to that whole, and of the issue of the passing moment. As this touches our problem, then, we come to see that what we are to be concerned with is not the pain or travail, but the final outcome and the lasting good. Viewed in separate and isolated events, nature, life, and history, have doubtless much to sadden and cause distress, but looked at as one whole, each and all of these things may, nay, do wear a different aspect, and as to Meredith one every way much brighter far, for thus he sings,

All smiles ran the highways wet,
For nought of a sorrow they knew.

Failure is a category, which we have no competency to apply to God. Browning has his guesswork when he says,

Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain ; which must not be.

Perhaps Wordsworth placed an undue emphasis on his thought that,

One impulse from a vernal wood,
Can teach us more of man,
Of moral evil, and of good,
Than all the sages can.

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

And yet, in so singing, he would have us learn as from that one great whole, in which outward nature is an important and constituent part, and which is really the sphere, in which man does his work, and exerts his influence.

If things are broken up, and looked at in their separations from one another, as without any obedience to law or purpose, then we have a chaos, and not a cosmos, and with "Hamlet" one might complain of

The weight of all this unintelligible world.

We might, indeed, feel that things were "out of joint," when really it is not the world, or things,

that are so "unintelligible," or "out of joint," but our own way of looking at them that is wrong. When the scheme of things is spoken of, "as a sorry scheme," or when a recent writer says, "Such development cannot have an aim," surely an emphasis wholly wrong is laid upon

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
just by making this great mistake of
Thinking too precisely on the event.

"Hamlet" did not understand the world, in which he was placed, but that did not mean that the world itself, after all, was not to be understood by man, if only he would take a wider, wiser, and a fuller look at its process, and its wholeness. For "Hamlet" had lost the balance of reality, having got out of contact with the facts of life. The one-sidedness, which often appears in such cases, arises from the imperfect way in which the problem is stated. Let it be truly stated, and then the difficulties will be overcome.

"The world," says Carlyle, "is not dead, and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres, but Godlike, and my Father's house." And "The earth is now my needy mother, and not my cruel step-dame." Earthquakes, disasters, plagues, looked at alone, seem to contradict the belief in an ever working out goodness, and to make those atheists, whose theism was wholly inadequate and incomplete. If, however, all these things

are more deeply viewed in their place and circumstance, they may be seen to be a blessed prophylactic, or warning finger raised to bid men beware of dangerous zones, and remove by prompt and effective remedial measures of better sanitation the shameful causes of disease. A true optimism would bid men sing,

There is never a sorrow of heart,
That shall lack a timely end.

“The shadows are deep because they are thrown upon the background of a great faith.”

In the world in its making there is tribulation, but even in the midst of that, there is the joy of victory and conquest, just as in this world-making life is asserting its own inherent and essential supremacy, and bringing all things more and more under its better power and dominion. Hence the “rapture of the forward view.”

Regarding the process of evolution as in its first stages opposed to the ethical order, Huxley spoke of pain as “the baleful product of evolution.” While admitting that “the ethical nature is born of the cosmic nature,” he adds, strangely enough, that it “is necessarily at enmity with its parent.” Now must there not be some relation, some innate, essential reference from the first in the natural to the moral? Must there not be some altruism, some mother-love, which lies at the basis of the highest ethics, in the early movements of the natural process? Science has found in the daisy, and the wild guelder rose, the law of re-

nunciation, and sees that all life above the lowest is living "solely in virtue of service." Beauty becomes the expression of a transcendental obedience. Professor Henry Drummond has dwelt eloquently on the essential presence in life of this principle of altruism, "of love itself, of love as love, of love as life, of love as humanity, of love as the pure and undefiled fountain of all that is eternal in the world." To him motherhood is fundamentally altruistic.

The woman soul leadeth us upward, and on. The more this is seen, the more there are "praises awakened by the understanding of God's ways." The deeper here we press the more shall we find at the very heart of nature that the suffering, which to some appears a mystery, and all unnecessary, is involved in the law of highest service, which we believe to be the essential law of the universe, so that all worthy being serves and in serving suffers. Would we learn the "true mystic secret of nature, going the road to her soul, even the real," we shall find her meaning, not in shreds, and patches, but in the whole, the finished outcome, not in bits, but in great processes.

Do readings of earth draw thence,
Then a concord deeper than cries
Of the Whither, whose echo is Whence,
To jar unanswered, shall rise.

At the head of the evolutionary process stands man, as we have said, the heir of all the ages, and the promise, and the potency of man as man is yet to be, for his very greatness lies in his capacity

to surpass himself, and be as a bridge to something better than he hath yet attained. As part, nay, as crown of history, he is sib and kin to the sentient universe. Nature's "social union," often broken by self-centred views, and arbitrary, thoughtless actions, is ever more and more being felt. With deep spiritual insight Mrs. Browning addressed her dog, as a gentle fellow-creature, and Tennyson sings of the

Pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part.

To all the creatures round, the soul in tune with nature's best

Would spare them sympathy
And he would set their pains at ease.

And while there is this unity of all sentient things in a common whole of life, there is also and very really the unity of the human race, the great thought of the solidarity of humanity, on which increasing importance is being laid in these modern times,—a true brotherhood, that makes all mankind truly one. Again we hear the great apostolic word, "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." Man cannot be detached from his fellows, and allowed to live his own life. All he has of joy, or sorrow, he has, as a member of the race, and that is cause or effect of joy or sorrow in another. An individual life cannot be viewed by itself, as if it were lived in an exhausted receiver. It is not alone. If one

in the human community suffer, then all therein share truly and intimately, deriving benefit and blessing, if that suffering is bravely and heroically met. What seem the thwackings of individuals, on which things are built up, are the means of untold good, in the making of others better. The whole is made better, and in this betterment the individuals gain. The suffering of the moment has not indeed as its immediate, or direct result the betterment of the individual, but of the whole society, yet in and by this, meditately, and most effectually the individual gains. Hence the brave soul in the conflict for the good, and true, is one,

Who never turned his back, but marched breast forward ;
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted wrong would triumph.
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better.
Sleep to wake.

Thus can man learn in and by suffering fitness for use and service, as "poets learn in suffering, what they teach in song." Our glory will lie in our being prepared to suffer, so as to put an end to the sufferings of others, by the removal of those things which are hurtful causes. If things are to continue on their upward course, as, of necessity they must, then there must be always brave sufferers, who take the post of danger and assume the risks, and find their glory and reward in going on, as theirs is the

Glory of virtue to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong,
The glory of going on, and still to be.

The creators of new values, and the raisers of standards ever higher are in the very forefront, and like the highest spires are the most exposed to the lightning flash. Thus the world's saints are its greatest sufferers. They do, and dare, and die.

This leads us to make a great and essential distinction between those sufferings, which men undertake for noble ends, in the service of their fellows, and those, which come on them through their own foolishnesses, and ignorant violations of these laws of the universe, which are the laws of God. We sometimes speak of accident, but this must be ever clearly borne in mind, that nothing happens without its own adequate cause. The element of contingency has been introduced into our thinking, but it has been pointed out that "events are as necessary as the truths of mathematics." It is our ignorance of causes and effects, that allows us to speak of possibilities. What transcends the knowledge of any moment does not transcend all knowing. We have, therefore, to get rid of the notion of the accidental, by a more thorough examination of all that is, and a more perfect understanding of causes. "The scheme of things, after long striving, will be found to be God's own witness to Himself."

And if this were done thoroughly many things, existing around, and allowed to exist, although they are the manifest and fruitful causes of suffering, would be removed. A careful scrutiny into

causes will prevent the use, either of the category of accident, or of that of a special providence, both of which ways of speaking are but declarations of ignorance, and may mean an unwillingness, or carelessness in the urgent matter of diligent inquiry, which is the first obligation resting upon all. For beyond all question, a large quantity of the suffering around is preventable. A very large amount of the sufferings endured in former days was due to causes, which have now in our time been removed, or rendered wholly inoperative. And what has been done in part is still being done in this direction in ever-increasing measure.

Among these causes, which have ever been productive of suffering, some of which, to our human credit, have been in some degree made less hurtful, and can be made ever more and more so, are those insanitary conditions in which so many live, and into which they have been driven by their own follies, and self-indulgences, or by those selfish ways of living among others, which have led them to gather up money for themselves, altogether regardless of how this gathering has affected the producers of it all.

It is true, alas! and pity 'tis, 'tis true, that "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." The "claim of the human" has been disregarded by a cruel indifference, and by an eager concentration on the supposed interests of the individual, in his separateness from the rest. "High prices, and large profits are in our

present industrial system, the causes of the suffering of the poor, and the temptation of the rich." A system, which has grown up amongst us, in the slow process of our modern days, with its strain of competition, and which too many regard as in some way bound up with the order of things, when it is just man made, and can by men be improved, is responsible for very many removable evils. With the curse of gold, and the iron wheels ever going forward, how true it is that there is a grinding of life down from its mark, and too often, even yet,

Little thinking if we work our souls, as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us, at the goal of pilgrimage.

Some have become unduly rich, while others have become unduly poor. The crowding of lives into congested areas, where they can neither have a blue sky, with its healing sunshine, nor the green sod, on which to play, has increased mortality, and especially among infants, who should be a first charge on any wise community. In such bad conditions sickness, plague, and disease, all alien to the will of God, are found to abound. No greater approximation has been made to what God can desire, than, in the response to the cry of the human heart for the removal of these hurtful conditions, the splendid schemes for city improvement, and new city planning. Society is feeling its responsibility for the evils it has so largely created,

and a high reward has already been found in the way in which, in less than a half century the rate of mortality, e.g., in one great city, has been reduced by one half, even from 30 to 15.

No longer are sickness and premature death regarded as chastisement or punishment sent from heaven, which the sufferers are to bear meekly, but rather "all sufferers shall be physicians unto us, as creators of new conditions." It is hardly possible for us to believe that less than sixty years ago in our own country, sanitary improvements, and such a discovery as vaccination, were viewed with disfavour, as "flying in the face of Providence, and so preventing the ends, for which such trouble was sent." In 1853 a day of fasting was suggested, even by the Church authorities, but the Government urged that the wisest way of honouring God, would be by an order for improved methods of drainage, which would bring about conditions more in keeping with the divine law. We know that from God cometh only every good and perfect gift. And the best medical science, the true handmaid of religion, now lays its finger on the causes of all disease, and labours for their removal. It deals not so much with symptoms, and effects, as with the antecedent causes. Not temporary alleviation or cure even, but effectual prevention is now aimed at. All pain is but a divine call for the removal of what has brought about the trouble, an index finger not to be

neglected. And just as the Black Plague, leprosy, small-pox, and typhus have been removed from our midst, so may phthisis, and many children's troubles soon be overcome.

Going back to the time of Christ we can see, how in that ignorant age, diseases were traced to demoniacal influence, as in latter days to a purpose of chastisement. Such views simply resulted in the allowing of the evils to remain. Surely the intense and constantly manifested desire of Christ to heal the sick should have impressed His followers. So far as we can gather, this impression was great at first, for healing was a prominent thought in the early Church. But when men's minds were turned away to questions of government, ritual, and creed, the essential purpose of Christianity, as the removal of the world's sorrows, fell into the background. Thus often has Christ been "wounded in the house of His friends," and reproach been cast upon His great name. Gladly we hail every sign, which seems to tell us, that Christ is making once again His own impression on the world, and the reproach, which ought to have been levelled only against His imperfect followers, and not against Him, is being rolled away.

Suffering, which is the result of the violation of the laws of God, is indeed a punishment of broken law, a consequence of a breach in the established order, but it comes not, as we see now, from any interference, or interposition of God ; the violation carries with it, as in its own self, its issue and

result. Thus pain and penalty stand in closest connection, and this the meaning of the two words clearly indicates. The derivation of each is the same. Pain is *poena*, i.e. penalty. But this is not in any legal sense; it is in the nature of things.

Harm has been done here by a theory of rewards, and punishments, with a legal code, and a juristic view of the universe. Reward is involved in the doing of the right, the obeying of law, while punishment is likewise involved in the doing of the wrong, the breaking of law. A legal theory has come in, and the result has been the separation, in a mechanical way, between the action and its consequence. The significance of the action at the moment of doing has in this way been much lessened. What counts, and must therefore never lose its place in our thinking, is the action itself, in its own character, and essential qualities. Already with the action done, the character of the doer is affected for weal or woe. The safety is in the not doing wrong, or rather in the doing of right, and the pain, the penalty, is in the doing of wrong. Thus each day becomes a judgment day, and each act its own approbation, or condemnation. This thought falls to be considered in connection with the sphere of action in the great here and now, but at this point it is important to remember that the cause of the trouble must be diagnosed in full.

And that cause is found in the action. The legal theory has done this harm to the conception

of God that it has led men to think chiefly of God as maintaining justice, as a great and supreme Judge. Justice has become detached from the course of things. What is legally inflicted has been distinguished from that which is really the consequence of things. If God is seen carrying on the government of the universe by the laws of His own institution, all exceptional acting on His part will be unnecessary, and difficulties made by a false conception will be dismissed.

If, however, all the element of preventable suffering be eliminated, there will yet remain a large amount of suffering in the world, as good and noble souls oppose themselves to all those forces of the past and present, which resist any forward progress, or any change at all on the existing *status quo*. The man that does wrong suffers from his own wrongdoing, but the man that does right suffers also in his efforts to do right, and to counteract the evil. His entry on this endeavour is voluntary in the truest sense; the only constraint comes from within his own soul. Knowing that "prevention is better than cure," the removal of causes better than any amount of alleviation, or amelioration of effects, good men willingly suffer in this great work. They expose themselves to much self-denial, expenditure and exhaustion of life energy, and even obloquy, to bring about a better state of things. They find even their happiness in such high and worthy suffering, all self-imposed, as they seek to take out of the way all the hindrances and barriers to

the divine way of working. And if in such a case sickness comes, or the loss of all things, this can be bravely borne, if the sufferer understands and feels, that what he is suffering is really a means of making the causes of the evils, he was battling with, more fully known, and thus more easily removed. Every effort to remove suffering springs from the measure, in which sympathy has been felt with the sufferer, the degree in which one has put himself in the place of another, and thus so borne his sorrow as to be impelled to seek for its ending. We clasp evil and wrongness to our hearts, as one would clasp and crush a nettle. The conviction deepens, that what is wrong is not to continue in God's world, and any suffering that in any effective way might bring about this glad result, will be undertaken joyfully indeed.

Thus it will be pressed in upon us that the suffering of the good will cease to be a problem, and that on the contrary it will be the good man that will suffer, and that most keenly for the good of others. Every day the loving mother suffers for her child, the noblest soul for his people, and the true patriot for his country. In such cases suffering is the hall-mark of the worthy soul. It is not a judgment, an infliction, a "visitation," or a chastisement, but a virtue of the highest kind. That altruism, which is dimly, if surely seen in the lowest forms of life is here seen in man, the crown of the whole, "the consummation of the scheme of things," and in the highest man in

the highest form. The superman, the better man, that is yet to be, will not satisfy himself with mere pity, but will spend himself in trying to produce such a humanity, as will surpass the present, as the present has surpassed the past, and caused "the tiger and the ape to die." Herein is found the opportunity of true martyrdom in the effort to secure "nobler manners, better laws," and in a frontal attack on all "those social lies, that warp the truth," and such martyrs are the seed of a higher race.

The improvement of the race, so dear to the heart of the good, is bound up with the advance of society as a whole. The aim, in a wise evolution, is not so much the punishment or chastisement of the individual, as such, but his treatment as a member of the whole. The aim is to eliminate all that is hurtful to the social whole, and the segregation of everything, and every person that contributes only harm to others. The trend and tendency in this direction is already very marked, but, doubtless, in the protection of itself, and the removal of those elements, which have inflicted untold suffering on the best interests of men in the past, a more vigorous and drastic policy must yet be undertaken. The locking up of a criminal, or the detention of a vicious or feeble-minded person, is demanded by society, and that not for a brief time, but for life, or, at least, until under some wise reformatory treatment, the man is rendered fit to discharge some useful or healthy function among his fellows. The martyrs, who

have died, "opening up new ways" for an increase of human well-being, demand that their sufferings shall not be in vain. They must see of the travail of their soul.

So, also, is the axe laid at the root of the tree of all modern forms of selfishness. Undue wealth, or wealth or land not wisely used for the best interests of the community, must for the good of the whole be dealt with. If a rich man, living solely for himself, and caring nought for his people, were stripped of all that he has, there would be no unjust suffering, for the continuance of what has been, was only bringing suffering without any reason on others. In our story of "Job," if there had been a wrong use of wealth, and possessions, the stripping would not have caused surprise, or just complaint. In his case there was on the contrary, a wise and generous use of what he had. According to the plan of the book, it is clear that what happened to our hero did not in any way affect his view or use of what he had. There is no proof that at the last he put less importance on his possessions, than he did at the first. Man the microcosm, is apt to magnify himself at times, as if he were a whole, when he is only a part, and some times a very small part. He asserts his claims, and rights, all forgetful of what is of vastly more importance —his duties and responsibilities.

There is thus taught to us by the very best science that there is ever a going on to a something better. Any existent order is not to be

identified with the moral order of the universe. No social state, however perfect, or however much approved by Church or State, is to be regarded as what God would desire. The great Republic is still before us, and "with its vision glorious" our longing eyes can be ever blessed. The divine order is in the making, in the great becoming, as men here are pressing on through blows, and buffetings, through storm and stress to the better day. Those, of course, are only deniers of the moral order, who look for it in any accomplished state. The denial of such a divine moral order ever springs from a wrong way of looking at things. And those are responsible often for leading men to deny here the true moral order, who seek a divine sanction for what is, after all, only their own contriving. While pretending to honour God, they really only make Him an expedient, a *Deus ex machina*, to suit themselves, and to meet their own need of some external authority for what they defend.

The question has been asked, Does God care? Surely, if rightly conceived, He must care, and that greatly. If the grand goal to which everything is tending is His own glory and perfection, the fulfilment of His own deepest desire, then how much, indeed, He must care! And in this caring, the divine suffers,—God suffers all the pain of delay, all the pain of opposition, all that His creatures and His children suffer. Suffering is thus seen to be divine, and in suffering man stands in the "Holy of Holies," face to face with

God. For the joy that is before Him, "in the finished and coronated work," God endures all the pain of time. It is a strange thing, that the great master, Ruskin, says, when he speaks about "divinely ordained imperfections."

Ah ! it is only true perfection that God ordains, the imperfect is only the passing, it is on the way to the crowning day.

Science would teach the mind to see the gradual unveiling of God, basing this great conviction on its supreme laws of conservation and continuity. It can see no leap or gap. *Nihil per saltum*. The future links itself, in its perfect ongoing, with the present and the past. God never maketh ought of mystery, but rather in an ever fuller revealing of Himself, and the real, He is giving us what science bids us wait for and expect. The future holds the perfect unveiling.

God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is His song.

We have dealt with the Book of "Job" entirely as a serious and historical attempt to explain how the good man suffers.

Others from St. Gregory down to William Blake, artist and poet, have dealt with it as a great allegory, reading into it not the views of the time when it was written, but their own particular views of their own way of thinking. Very striking and remarkable is the Vision of Job as dealt with by the above-named poet artist. The great

conflict is regarded as wholly spiritual, and in its course all that is wrong and sinful is gradually seen, and given up, so that the sufferer by the means of loss, and abandonment of what he once had, and held dear, passes into a higher life. Self is the Satan, and everything done, even high alms-giving to the poor and needy in the spirit of self-satisfaction, is to be brought to an end so that in a new spirit of sacrifice and service man may do what is right. On outward possessions value had been once laid ; it has to be learnt that belief in their efficacy cuts men off from the highest life. In having all things common Blake found his ideal, and "Job's" suffering was of value as leading up to this.

In a series of twenty-one etchings the story of our Book is graphically set forth. The long time of struggle is as a night of death ; its cessation is the time when

The Eternal day
Appears upon our hills ! Awake Jerusalem !

By the process of experience man's errors, and misconceptions are purged away. All sense of merit, also, is to be purged away. A higher view of God and the Divine, too, is to be reached, so that in God true compassion may be found to dwell, and the Divine seen to be deeply "touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities." "Man must be made naked, in order to be clothed with the Divine mercy."

In mere isolated individuality an evil is seen to lurk, and by some means this must be surmounted. For "corporeal friends are spiritual enemies." The silent sympathy of Friends leads to Protest. Better far to have some expression made of their real views, than to have an apparent acceptance of his position as wholly refined.

The Protest brings it all keenly into relief, and thereby the Friends are called upon to justify their views, against which "Job" protests. The poet finds an essential error in "Job," nay in all men, even this of self-hood, with its own self-righteousness and merit. He sees in the process and final result of the conflict in this great drama the gradual, and at last complete passing out of man from all false self-reference, into a spiritual identification with others, in which alone true manhood, and ultimate character is to be found. When this is brought about by suffering, and the loss of every outward thing as a man's own he transcends all error, and so embraces truth as to see God here and now as on his side. He has thus in a true communion with God and others all things in common, finding his glory in receiving rather than in giving. What is slain is selfishness in every form, and thus man "reassumes his ancient bliss," his true position. In the Whirlwind God descends, and "becomes as we are, that we may be as He is." Here the allegorical treatment of our Book is manifest, many of its best thoughts springing from a view of things, largely influenced by Christianity.

CHAPTER X

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING IN ITS RELATION TO IMMORTALITY

THE scientific demand for continuity, and completeness, which was before us in the last chapter, has a large bearing on the relation of suffering to the present life. What fills the vision of the man of science is a perfect on-going towards a perfect goal, and he looks for this goal as in this life made complete. The great future, which holds the unveiling is not to him a beyond, on another planet, but on and in this earth, already drenched with the blood of martyrs for the common good, and to be yet brought under the dominion of man in his highest and best manifestation. The coming kingdom of God is to be the kingdom of man. The perfect life is to stand in the closest relation with the ever bettering life, and is to be its crown. There is here a protest against a view, which only and alone sees

On earth the broken arcs ; in heaven a perfect round.

A demand is made for completeness, as the outcome of the here and now, so as to give worth

and value to it all. Too often another world has been brought in to redress the "balance of the present," as if the evil and unequal circumstances of to-day, with their poverty, and sorrow-creating conditions, are ever to remain. This, they tell us, is a vale of tears, and the song of man is a song of woe. "Man was made to mourn." The troubles and perplexities of time are too great to be solved here, hence as a *dernier ressort* heaven has been thought of. And in this way selfish men have with more equanimity beheld the sorrows of their less fortunate fellows, and done nothing to lessen them. If Lazarus has his evil things now, he will have his good things by and by, and thus will amends be made to him, for any injustice, he may haye suffered at their hands.

This was put in its baldest form by Napoleon, when issuing his famous Concordat. Thus he wrote, "Society cannot exist without inequality of material wealth, and this inequality cannot exist without religion. There must be poor, and rich in this world, but later on in eternity things will be arranged better." Here there is no hopeful vision of a better society with truer arrangements on earth, and so eternity is brought in as a sop to make the poor man's lot, so often created by the rich man's greed, and by social arrangements, fixed by Government, more easily borne.

But, as we have seen, there has been growing a truer conception of ever improving social arrangements here, according to which those causes, which create suffering, have to be removed by

radical, and painstaking efforts in some brave and strenuous campaign. A worthier thought refuses to allow that suffering is in any way necessarily bound up with human life, or to view it as in any way permanent. It is here to be surpassed, even though that surpassing may entail suffering on the brave and good. Slowly, very slowly, has this conviction been gaining for itself a place, nor is it yet as firmly grasped by all, as it should be, and will be, by and by. Thus slowly the light ascends, thus slowly the tide advances ; but both come to their fulness at last. So soon will all feel that beside this there is no greater truth or duty than that all should labour to make everything better, and every person happier, even here and now.

The human heart cannot long remain indifferent to any human cry, and the children's cry pierceth deep.

The child's sob in the silence, curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.

What cry more powerful than the cry of the human ? It rises from the depths addressed to God,—“ Be pitiful, O God ! but it strikes the human ear, and answer soon requires.” It is an ultimatum, and if the rich preach “ rights,” and future days, Mrs. Browning bids them hear an angel scoffing. For, truly viewed, man was not made to mourn, and if, perchance, he mourns too long, the loud protest will be raised, not against God, but against those, who wrongly invoke His Name, in defence not of His plans but of their own, not of His moral

order, but of their own. When the tide of the human spirit begins to flow, in all its might, woe be to those, who have tried to keep it back!

In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward look, the land is bright.
And so . . .
Comes silent flooding in the main!

Carlyle foretold the rise of this spirit, when he said, "O thou, that pinest in the imprisonment of the actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom, wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth,—the thing, thou seekest, is already with thee, here or nowhere, couldst thou only see it!"

"We are" said Meredith, "the children of beneficence," and as such can only find our happiness in spreading that beneficence, as its parents too. The earth, which is our mother, and which we embrace, requires of all of us her children, a true correspondence between the truth and the goodness of the ideal, as seen in God, and the reality as seen in its actual accomplishment on earth.

It has been said that the "sacred influence of pain is unmeaning apart from the fact of immortality." But on such a view the spiritual significance of true and worthy action is destroyed altogether. The great action for the good of another, often involving pain, must find in itself its own reward. In "Paracelsus," Browning asks

And why this world, this common world, a foil to be,
A makeshift, a mere foil, how fair so ever,
To some fine life to come?

And Wordsworth bids us realise that “this very world,” which is the world of all of us, is

The place, where in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all.

And Meredith adds in his own way,

That the present is our sentence,
Her light is ours, if we list.

Now all the kind of thinking, which such poetic extracts seem to emphasise, only impresses on us this great thought, that we are to find here our essential happiness in its beginning and going on, as in a springing fountain, and its water ever flowing, the streams of which will grow, and deepen, like a mighty river. The observation of Froude is of importance, that “religious men in general are too well contented with the promise of a future life, as of a scene, where the seeming shortcomings of the divine administration will be carried out with a larger equity.” And he saw that a Church, which has simply to do with a Hereafter must lose power and influence in the great tasks of earth and time. The undue laying of emphasis on this view of things has, doubtless, arisen from an imperfect, even an ascetic conception of what religion means, and that

Jaundiced eye, to which all order festers,
All things here are out of joint.

What we have to avoid is what is referred to in these words, sometimes used in popular taunt against the clergy,

But then with the parson it's all "kingdom come."

There has undoubtedly grown up a dualism, not present in the early Christian Church, between "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Here "the life now" and "that which is to come" are knit closely together, and Harnack points out that to the Christians of the first century the future seemed to be already realised. An old hymn emphasises the false view, which depreciates life now in order to magnify the importance of the life to come.

Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death,
That never, never dies.
How make mine own election sure,
And when I fail on earth secure
A mansion in the skies.

Sometimes, as in an imperfect ideal of sainthood, suffering for its own sake has been welcomed. Religion as the service or pleasing of God was not found in any true idea of surrender to God, but rather in a false attitude to the world, and to its pressing duties. From these the monk fled, abandoning the post of duty, and the thickest of the fight, where his moral character might have been developed, and formed in the helping and succouring of many. The thought was of a

renunciation that was purely negative, a giving up rather than a heroic using of opportunity and overcoming of difficulties. God was supposed to be pleased, when His servants came out of a bad world, and men failed to see that God would have been far more pleased, if they had claimed the world for Him, and made its conditions more like what He would have them be.

It was thought that man's good was to be found in some merely negative, and protesting manner of life, giving up all the joys that were associated with life. Merit even came to be attached to suffering itself, and men have borne pain, as is done among the ascetics of India, with the idea that the gods will thus be propitiated, and bestow some special favour, thus purchased by suffering on their part. In this case, God is conceived of as angry, and requiring some act of renunciation from man, some suffering to secure His favour, and the passing of His wrath, an idea of God, wholly alien to the best thought and spirit in man. The value of suffering, as we have seen, lies not in itself, but in what of good it accomplishes for others. If it has no worthy end, or brings about no good result, then it is altogether foolish. Any mere crucifying of the flesh, or any mere martyr's dying, which is not for some high principle, the furtherance of truth or the help of man, can only be condemned. For it is only by entering into the duties of life, and bearing men's burdens, so as to put an end to human sorrow, that suffering is worthily incurred. Only he,

who fights life's battles bravely on the ensanguined field, and takes his place in every crusade to end or diminish human woe, and in some full, positive manner helps to make men more Godlike, and their lives and homes more heavenly, has and wears the crown of life, that fadeth not away. Such an one thinks of God dwelling on earth, and among men, and seeks to have Him ever more worthily lodged, as Ruskin says.

Pain has then in itself really no intrinsic worth ; unaccounted for pain only worketh rebellion of heart, and leadeth further from God and the good. Our most painful efforts, as Emerson has remarked, are often unnecessary, and fruitless. Many a man has allowed himself to suffer, through some misunderstanding, in a cause that has done no good, and so there has been no real heroism, but rather a miscalculation, and erroneous judgment, truly a failure of duty.

Submission to what has been regarded as the will of God has again been made a virtue of character, and has with bad results taken the place of that true virtue, which consisteth in doing the will of God. For the will of God is the good, and he who carries out that will, carries it on to yet greater things in ever widening circles of usefulness and blessing to mankind. To perceive that will and what it means is always to rise above what is at any moment present, and to recognise to what it is tending in its on-going. It is to put oneself bravely, and heroically on the side of God, and by what is, to seek to get to

something higher, and better. For we must ever be reaching forward, and thus be

Breathers of an ampler day,
For ever nobler ends.

Every situation has thus in itself, not as actually apparent, but as in a wrapping of possibility, its own ideal, and in any case, man is called upon to give to this its splendid form, that for which it really craves. The present without that which is to follow, is not made perfect any more than the past without the present.

Hence a man must do, and accomplish something by what he suffers. What must be manifest must be a spirit of action, and not of passivity,—an element of surmounting, and surpassing. If the suffering is simply viewed as a negative thing, as an event by itself, it loses all its value, for as we have already seen, that value lies in what is done for others, very much more than in what is at the moment gained even by those who suffer.

It has been truly said, “that we suffer, because we sin, but we sin, because we decline to suffer.” While the true soul will not take any suffering upon itself voluntarily, unless it has a worthy purpose in view, and can bring to itself some assurance of achieving some much needed advance, yet no amount of suffering in such a case will prevent it acting, if thereby it can

go on to the highest heights of real and effective good doing. A *via dolorosa*, nay, even a *via crucis*, will not deter, if that is a way to the redemption of mankind from any galling oppression. Along such a pathway the noblest of the race have gone in one long triumphant line of progress. They are of the number of those who will not hesitate, but

Welcome each rebuff,
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids not sit, nor stand, but go.
Be our joys three parts pain,
Strive, and hold cheap the strain.
Learn, nor account the pang, dare never grudge the
throes.

Perhaps, however, an error lurks in these lines, that now we quote from the same poet,

Put pain from out the world, what room were left,
For thanks to God, for love to man?
Creation's meant to hide Him all it can
And that's what all the blessed evil's for.

While Huxley had regarded pain as the "baleful product of evolution," the poet welcomes it, but let it never be so welcomed for itself. Pain by itself can never by itself be a cause of thanks to God, nor love to man. It may be recognised as the way whereby all things, and persons reach their perfection, but never as good in itself.

On our view, then, suffering is never there as something to be merely borne, or pitied;

never there as by a divine decree of sending or permitting, but as something, that can be explained with fuller knowledge, and which calls with loud voice for the removal of its cause, in a pity that surpasses itself, and goes forth in some noble deed of love. It is there in the onward movement, calling for more of zeal, and devotion, as a splendid opportunity for all to work the work of God. We must guard ourselves against the worship of sorrow, and against ever thinking that,

Man was made to mourn, or that
Death is the poor man's friend."

Thus Sophocles speaking of the death of Oedipus, that came so suddenly, says,

The night of death as blessing came.

For only in a drying of tears, and in a determined endeavour to live a noble, and useful life is the truth of things shown forth. Life must be seen as a great arena for service, in which there is the making of character, with all the joy that that brings. In other days than ours when life seemed to be depreciated, when young lives were cut off, it was said that "those die young, whom the gods love." In our modern time every effort is made to reduce the infant mortality, and to make better conditions, in which children may be born, and grow up to be useful in their day and generation.

We find, then, the meaning and worth of life to lie in its being an opportunity for a splendid ser-

vice of others ; in which service our own life is being made the most of every day. From this point of view, life here

Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love.
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

An opportunity, this rather than a probation. The view that life is a probation has been put thus by Butler, when he says, "We are in a state of trial with regard to a future world." On this view actions are looked at in the light of a future judgment day, at the end of the world, instead of being looked at in their immediate bearing upon those around us. For God is not so much testing us now, so as to pronounce a judgment upon us when we die, but He is now giving us a great opportunity of being and doing good. His aim surely is to save us now that we may live on those lines that may be most productive of benefit to others.

Sometimes death has been set before our mind as the beginning of life, a view, which as we have seen, tends to deprecate life. On the contrary, life is full of significance as a redeemed life, ever more and more devoted to service, and death is itself only a passing into a fuller and better form of service. Here and now we may enjoy the favour, and help of God, and spending all our life in his service, we may end it in His fuller favour, as we have finished the work, which He gave us to do.

Thus service must here begin, and go on in ever-increasing ways, and find in the higher, and completed life to come its true crown and glory.

Our noisy years seem moments in the being,
Of the eternal silence,

but they are moments of supreme worth, as they are not parts of a life, that is at ease, and drifts, but so sharpened as to command its course.

No doubt much harm has been done by looking at life from the merely legal, or juristic point of view. When this is done actions are chiefly dealt with in the light of law, and life is regarded as preparatory to a coming judgment, when decisions will be given on which all peace or happiness will depend. A deeper, and a truer thought of life would make us think of every moment having its own judgment, and that in no outward or legal sense, but in what is much better, a moral and a spiritual sense. Opportunity and the enjoyment of a measure of fruition would thus go together, as workers of what is good find in what they do a great and present reward.

Each day the true soul will be trying its own power, so truly God-given, and in an ever worthier exercise, and application of this power to the occasions presented in life, will make manifest to all its own inherent warrant not only to live on in a blessed future life, but to live even here in a useful and effective manner. True greatness will be shown in living worthily every day and

that greatness will carry in itself the promise, and potency of its own continuance. As has been said, that man is truly immortal, who does immortal work. Our throbbing world of life needs great men and women to do its work, and provides on every hand a large field for the doing of such work. Many of what seem the insoluble enigmas of a man's life are made by himself, as through sloth or indifference he refuses to be up and doing. By thoughtlessness as to his ways of living his own life, and by indifference as to the effects of circumstances upon himself and others he may only be bringing upon himself trouble and sorrow, in a wholly unnecessary manner, and so lessening the opportunities for help and succour. If only men could fully apply themselves to a careful study of life, and its laws, they could bring about very soon those true conditions in which they might live longer, and happier lives. The old prophet had surely this vision before his eyes, when he said, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not fulfilled his days; for he that dieth at a hundred years shall be accounted a child."

Life becomes a brave warfare with the time-spirit, in which the best in us must overcome. There must be constantly a determination to resist everything that draws us aside from our high calling, and if the question be asked, as it has been, "Why comes temptation?" then the answer must ring out loud and clear that it comes that man may rise above it all, and be "pedestalled in

triumph." In many ways this is true, as experience proves.

And if highest reward of purest blessedness is to be found in the good action, it must also be emphasised that in the case of the man, who does wrong, though there be no appearance of outward suffering, there is yet in the wrong itself supreme loss to the doer of it, as it leaves marks of wounding on the soul, and makes life less and less capable of holding in itself aught of true or enduring happiness. The condemnation of the wrong is not to be looked for outside, or in outward change of circumstances, either in this present, or in the great future. Wrongdoing is wrongdoing essentially to a man himself. The view that postpones punishment to a distant eternity, after death, and in the great Beyond, may only, as it has undoubtedly done, embolden the wrongdoer, and encourage him in his evil ways. It was Butler's view that "The moral government of God is exercised by gradually conducting things so, in the course of His Providence, that every one at length, and upon the whole, shall receive according to his deserts." Now a deeper view is voiced by Emerson, when he says, "Wrongdoing punishes itself at once by fear, for fear indicates great wrongs which must be revised. The thief steals from himself. The swindler swindles himself." "There is perfect compensation in the universe." "No one can wrong the universe."

But when we speak of compensation, we must

remember that this is not something of an outer kind. It is, on the contrary, inward and spiritual, belonging to the man himself. "There is a deeper fact in the soul than compensation, to wit its own nature. The soul is not a compensation, but a life. The soul is." And such a soul can only find its real and true compensation in an "undying, unquenchable, uncompromising hatred of evil, and an unshaken will to stamp it out." The most sublime reward will be found in efforts to help and gladden men.

And thus, too, our Shakespeare, fully conscious of what evil brings to the wrongdoer, in his great "Macbeth," makes Lady Macbeth cry out in despair, "What! will these hands ne'er be clean? Here's the smell of blood still! All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh!" "For" as she says, "what's done cannot be undone." And Macbeth is made to say so truly,

Cure her of that;
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain?

asking thus a question, to which he knows there is but one answer and that in a decided negative. There comes, as in "Hamlet" we are taught, that dread time, when even repentance is itself not only too late, as the writer to the Hebrews shows it was in Esau's case, but also the time when it is impossible.

Try what repentance can ; what can it not ?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent ?

The secret sin so twines around the very springs
of all being that as in Lancelot's case it was so
strange, of such a kind

That all of pure
Became bound up with it.

and to such a man the quest was found to be one
that was not for him. The Holy Grail "was veiled
and covered," so far as he was concerned.

The law of right lies at the very heart of all
things, not in an unthinking fate, or even a loftier
Nemesis, but in the very purpose and constitution
of the universe, in inexorable, and irresistible
force of the good, a stone that grinds to powder
all that come against it. In his own deep con-
science, and in the deeper conscience, ever growing
in the community, man feels that wrong stands
condemned, and must in all its forms cease in the
interest of all and each. The aim of all will in-
creasingly be to bring about the state of things
anticipated by the prophet, when there "shall be
nothing to hurt or to destroy in all the land."

And this happy state is hastened, just as men
come to see, that the "rule of each," should be
"the good of all." Every kind of emphasis, and
influence should then be brought on men to show
them the worth of the great here and now, which
they have as opportunity, and arena of highest
service. And they will see that their true immor-

tality will be secured, as it is essentially bound up in a life that is well and nobly spent here in doing good.

In our day the distinctive feature is the awaking of what is called the "social conscience." More and more it is being felt that society has in itself, and in its own preservation a supreme force, which must be used for the bringing of all individuals into line with its best interests. All those who would live truly must consult these, or find themselves being increasingly prevented from doing any harm, or continuing to live a merely selfish and self-centred life. The worth of the individual will be found to lie, just in what he contributes to social well-being, and his hurtfulness in the fact, that he is withholding his due from others. Hence as "the supreme law of the State is its own well-being," all the forces in the State must be used for the segregation of the unfit, and feeble-minded, so that they may not be allowed to perpetuate the evils, from which our race has so long suffered under a wrong conception of human worth, and the requirements of God. What is worthy in man will always assert itself, and that will be found to be in harmony with what God desires, while in a strenuous effort to diminish, and eliminate the hurtful elements in society, it will also be seen that man is moving on those lines that are ever dear to the heart of God.

It is, furthermore, to be noticed that if the principle of an evolving order, with an unbroken

continuity is kept in mind, then much light is thrown on the method by which progress comes, and is therefore to be sought at all times, and by all true lovers of their kind. Evolution stands in direct opposition to revolution, as does a true, gradual, and well-considered reform, ever moving on, to a rash, sudden, or premature overthrow of the present system. The imperfections of any moment are indeed to be fully recognised, and so really understood, but the pulling down of what is in order to replace it by something else may only be followed by something worse. This notably happened in the case of the French Revolution, when the extreme, and ill-considered measures of those, who rose to power, were soon succeeded by another despotism.

The spirit of anarchy, which has been manifested from time to time in the political world, has also been seen in religious circles, as growing weary of all quiet, and steady efforts to make this world better, or seized with the conviction that it never can be made better, men have declared that the kingdom of heaven for which they waited, must come suddenly, as in a moment, as a bolt from the blue, and thus bring about a completely new state of things. Earth, they say, can never be the scene of a perfect kingdom of God. Such thinkers cannot see any hope for the race in a slow and steady evolution, and therefore their hands hang idly at their sides, and they discourage any active crusade.

If, however, we look at the law of progress in

every age, we can observe, how it is only by the steady, and gradual removal of wrong conditions, and an improvement all along the line that a better state can be brought about. In nature the law of growth is found at work on every hand, and the new and the better comes out of the old. There is certainly a making of all things new, but in this best and most effective manner, by breathing into men a new and a higher spirit. Not only must the city be built, but the men and women must be prepared, who are to dwell in it. Unfit persons will soon make unfit the fittest city.

To enter the true heaven of the soul men must be born again, and "born different." This new birth must affect their whole way of living here, for the worth of any new birth will only be seen in what it does for men around. Character is not some private possession, but an asset of the race. It avails only as having in some high degree the qualities, which contribute to the efficiency of men. In place of the old agreement, which Huxley noted, on the part of men "to do nothing, but that which it pleases them to do, without the least reference to the welfare of the society into which they are born," under the influence of a new birth they will only do those things, which will benefit others.

We quote Nietzsche's striking way of putting things :—

"Courage is the best slayer; courage slayeth also fellow-suffering. Fellow-suffering is the deepest abyss; as deeply as a man looketh into

life, so deeply also doth he look into suffering." "Think ye that I wished henceforth to make snugger couches for you sufferers? Or show you new and easier footpaths? Nay, nay, three times nay, ye shall always have it worse and harder."

A close relation thus will be found to exist between the heaven of the individual, and the heaven of the race. The individual will find his highest joy here in doing good, and in his immortality this will be his bliss that he did for others what he could. And the heaven of the race will be a state, in which their highest good will have been attained by its noblest aspirations being fulfilled through the labours of its best sons.

The heavenly spirit must show itself in those who are to inherit heaven. In other words, heaven must begin here and now, and the experience of men must be increasingly filled with all that goes to make up the ideal of blessedness, even a supreme service. The true remedy for the ills of life lies not in some wistful longing for a great Beyond, but in a steady elevation of the whole moral nature and outlook of men, so that we may have joy and hope, and pass into that immortal life, which is the crown, and consummation of all life that is true and worthy here.

From this point of view the difficulties about the future life and immortality will more or less pass away, and the full significance of the life that is now will be seen, and in no way depreciated. The individual will not simply let evil pass him by, without minding it, in a Stoic

spirit, but he will brace himself in every part of his being to help to put an end to it. He will neither be a mystic dreaming of some better state, and by ecstatic thought raising himself above the evils of the present, nor will he be an ascetic, fleeing in an imagined self-defence from these evils, but he will be a brave doer, meeting in full force what ever hurts his fellows, and finding his true vocation in what has been described as the mission of the twentieth century, the securing the health of the social organism.

But well I know,
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors.

As thus we lay the emphasis on the life that is now, and seek to see it in ever greater fulness of loving service, we seem to be coming back to somewhat of the Old Testament view of life, which dwelt almost entirely on life here in the fellowship of God as the true life of the soul, and shrunk away from death, with its passing into the gloomy realms of Sheol. Most undoubtedly life is good, and every effort should be made to make it ever better. Its goodness is in the shining of God's face upon all that we do, when we are really co-workers together with Him in doing good. Whatever is done to the glory of God is always done for the good of men. We accept an important contribution from the Old Testament, when we find wherein true life consists, and we go on to a fuller and completer view of life,

when we see that such a true life must continue, even as God continues. "Because I live, ye shall live also." In this sense life and immortality were brought to light in the gospel. For in that gospel love is enshrined, and love lives for evermore. Here is the power of the endless life.

Immortality falls thus to be based rather upon the content and meaning of life, its moral and spiritual worth, than upon the nature of the soul, as in other days. The spiritual life, which has become an individual's own possession, his central core of being, makes him an independent bearer of spiritual life. He who makes the present, as Plato said, "great and rich in content," has an everlasting heritage.

To love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death, nor change.

The continued life is not brought in to solve the discords of time, as a means of consolation, but comes as the fulfilment of a noble doing, which waged war with all these discords, and sought their ending. "Those," it has been said, "who lose their belief in immortality too often sink under the moral paralysis of a creed, which seems to leave so little that it is worth while to attempt." Only those who find so much in life worth attempting wish for fuller longer life in which to realise noblest ideals. Meredith sings,

Death is the word of a bovine day,
Know you the breast of the springing to be?

"Religion is far less an affair of another world, than men have thought." That other world is secured in the right and wise using of this present world. And the future ever contains in itself more to follow, as Browning has it,

Ah! but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's heaven for?

The inevitable end of life here is not sad, if it be but to pass into the fuller day. And all fear of death is removed from that man who has found his highest worth in acting from the "pure thought of duty, and unselfish disposition." George Eliot has discounted the value of a personal immortality, and found her reward thus,

In thy soul to hear
The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
Of the world's springtide in thy conscious breast.

But to feel this keenly, and in ever-increasing sympathy not only here, but for evermore, as we see God's great purpose, which on earth we tried to help onward to its fuller goal, ever reaching that more nearly,—to feel all that this means in clearer, gladder consciousness, this is life indeed, the true life of man.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING VIEWED FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT

HAVING dealt with the question of suffering from many standpoints, it now remains for us to view it from a distinctly Christian one, and in the light, which the teaching of Jesus throws upon the matter.

The end, towards which we have been travelling from its simpler openings in the Book of "Job," which we took under consideration, through the contributions given by Greek thought, and more modern scientific progress, is now clearly in sight. Much has been done in the course of thought to remove difficulties, arising from imperfect views, and a less advanced state of knowledge, and thus the way has been cleared for a more adequate, and satisfying view of our problem. Not only, however, in a negative, but much more in a positive way, has very much been done to make more easy a solution of the question of former days. As we have seen in our two last chapters, modern science, with its more careful observation of the facts of life, unhindered by false categories of thought,

has made a splendid contribution to this whole question, and it falls to us now, taking full advantage of all this added teaching, to see just how the teaching of Jesus on this great theme of suffering is finding a better expression, and a fuller embodiment, as men grasp more closely its essential elements.

All truth, in its first expression, is like a seed cast into the ground, which is only seen in its fulness and splendour, after very many days. The great teacher stands every way above his age. His truth cannot be received in its completeness, for the capacity to understand has not as yet been developed, and any expression of it at any time necessarily partakes of the limitations of that age. What is essential may not be seen, and emphasis may be laid on aspects less important, and vital to the teacher's thought. Time only can bring truth into its true perspective, and reveal its permanent, and abiding element.

All this is abundantly seen in connection with the history of the teaching of Christ. If we say, as we do, that this teaching does solve the problem of suffering, we are at once asked, What do you mean by Christianity? Where is it to be found? Are we to look to the great creeds of the Church, in which an effort has been made to enshrine the truth of Christ, or are we not much rather to look to the great issues of the teaching of Christ, in the Christian ages? Certainly we would reply that we are to concern ourselves far rather with the dominant spirit, which has been associated with

Christianity in the shaping of life and thought, as in controlling endeavour, with that, much rather than with any credal forms, for these latter only express the stage, which any age has reached in the understanding of the truth. The value of the teaching is always found in its leaven-like force, in its spiritual power, rather than in its expressed form. The form is but as a leathern bottle, which the new wine is ever bursting.

If we are, therefore, to find the teaching of Jesus in its essential worth, we are to look for it in the new spirit, which He has breathed into our world, a spirit which is ever guiding all to better and nobler ways of living. We cannot simply go back to the words of Jesus in the New Testament. Rather there is laid upon us the duty of placing ourselves alongside of Him, and discovering His view point, learning of Him His secret, in this best sense, as the principle, on which He ever acted, and would, therefore, have His followers to act.

For this seems most deserving of note, that He did not only want men to believe on Him but to walk in His ways. Perhaps the Church has allowed men to rest too much in a belief concerning Christ, and not sufficiently impressed upon them that our Holy religion is a life, rather than a creed, a way of living, rather than a way of believing. Doubtless, a true belief is bound up with a true life, but there has been an institutional belief, which has not always gone beyond the institution. Meredith has complained

that, "parsondom" has treated "Christianity not as a religion, but as an institution," and most certainly we must be ever on our guard against any confusion between the essence of what Christ had to say, and the institutions, which have gathered round this, even with the highest intention of conserving it. A divorce has thus appeared between creed and life, which has most certainly retarded the progress of vital religion. The only way by which true honour can be done to Christ is, not by calling Him Lord, but by doing the things, which He saith.

What, then, did He say, and Himself do, when thus looked at? What is essential in the Master's mind, and, just because it was so, has gained, in the long ages since, its own place of influence, and authority in the world?

In the course of history there has been a struggle, and a progress. The human spirit has been striving to break every bond, and so to find out the truth, which might make it free, and which when once received, might exercise a transforming power. Against all imperfect forms of Christianity, this spirit has been protesting. For Christianity did not enter into the world in a fully developed form, like Minerva in the old myth. In Christ Himself, Whom we hail as our divine Master, no doubt the truth was in all its fulness, as in Him dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But when He "came to His own, His own received Him not." He was as a new force in an old age, and He lived among

conditions wholly alien to Himself, as He was in every sense the pioneer of conditions very much better every way. Thus He was far above those who had to interpret Him. He was no voice for that age, and no mouth for the petty people, by whom He was surrounded.

Taking up the New Testament, as we have it before us, it is at once seen that there is a distinct progress of thought, and a fuller, and nearer approximation being made to the meaning and understanding of His teaching. The writings of this book are great apologies, apologetic writings, or explanations of the new Faith, as apostles, and apostolic men, endeavoured to lead others to embrace Christ as their Messiah, and Lord, as they had done themselves. The new truth, which had been received, was acting like a great dissolving force, seeking ever a new expression, and creating better ways of thinking and living. The treasure was for that time, as it is for every time, in earthen vessels, ever more and more demanding worthier vessels, and by its own intrinsic power, and preciousness creating such.

First of all, we see the young Church led by Peter, and James, with its splendid enthusiasms, but hampered on every side by Jewish traditions as to law, rite and Temple. Soon the mighty force of St. Paul breaks through these trammels, into a wider liberty of action, as he carries the new Faith to the Gentiles, and yet how hindered he is in his thinking by Rabbinic conceptions, and modes of reasoning, as was only to be

expected from one, who had sat so diligently at the feet of Gamaliel. While, lastly, we have the Church of Ephesus, face to face with the great Greek world of thought, with its acute philosophers, and its splendid literature. From the circle of this Church is supplied the latest word as to the teaching of Jesus, in the spiritual Gospel according to St. John. And in this gospel there is given to us the sublime thought that men are to live by the life of Christ, as that life flows into them, as living branches, and so energises them.

It has to be noticed that the Epistle to the Hebrews occupies a place of its own, and as we have had occasion already to remark, expresses the old view of Elihu as to suffering being a chastisement sent by a father, quoting from the Book of Proverbs. This writing is also a great apologetic treatise, aiming at showing how the transition from the old Jewish position to the new Christian view was accomplished by one who was himself a Jew, as he sees all throughout the Old Testament the germs of the New, and finds springing, as from living seed, the higher truths of the better dispensation. To this writer, priest, temple, sacrifice in the old economy are but temporary types, and dim foreshadowings of a spiritual realisation of such germinal truths in the fulness of the times in Christ. Hence when we look at the words in the twelfth chapter let us regard them as very much in the light of transitional thinking, as the mind passes, and

not without difficulty, from an old and accepted view to a new, and a better.

On the old view that there was no progress in the unveiling of Christ in the New Testament, and that all the books of it were a unity in the sense that all parts had equal value as final truth, the teaching of "Hebrews" will present a difficulty. For it does not seem to our mind to be in agreement with the essential teaching of Christ Himself as to suffering and its meaning.

In order to discover what exactly Jesus taught on this subject, the interesting episode at Cæsarea Philippi is of great help. The words spoken at this time by Christ are characteristic and determinative as to His view of life. He was surrounded by men, who regarded suffering as incompatible with their ideal of what the Messiah was to be. To them He was to be a conquering hero, and a great national deliverer. He was in no sense to be a sufferer. Peter, as the spokesman of the apostolic group, declared his willingness to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, but when Jesus went on to connect suffering with the work of the Messiah, this was a thought abhorrent to him, as to all Jews.

Christ had, therefore, to give them a new, even His own, conception of what the Messiah was, and so wean their minds from a wrong view of the Messianic function. They thought of deliverance coming by way of conquest, by the shedding of the blood of others, but He thought of a deliverance that was to come by way of service, and sub-

mission, by the shedding of His own blood. The burden was not to be laid by the conqueror on the shoulders of others, but it was, He said, to be borne by Himself. This teaching was wholly new to them, and is a teaching which is not in harmony with any selfish kind of outlook on life, but, in all its essence, divine. The teaching of Isaiah liii. as to the one, who should suffer for others, had been altogether displaced in later Jewish thought, and the idea of a conquering, rather than of a suffering Messiah filled men's minds. In this way suffering as an element in the Messianic conception was only a stumbling-block. To Jesus, on the contrary, it was all essential, and important. "Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" "It behoved the Messiah to suffer." In these words His view of things is expressed quite clearly, and in words free from all ambiguity.

Formerly the endurance of suffering had been regarded as a shame, and a wrong; it had been viewed as punishment, or as chastisement. None of these ideas could in any way be connected with a divinely sent Messiah, and somehow the grand conception of Isaiah found no place in the minds of Christ's contemporaries. But it is just this that Jesus now lays hold upon, as He would impress on them the thought that suffering, instead of being a shame, may be a glory, and He would also make them see that it was really an essential element in every true and good life, that was at all worthy of any mention. Suffering, which was

once strange, and mysterious as punishment, or as chastisement, all so inadequately, and unsatisfyingly explained, in the teaching of Jesus has now a glory shining all around it. It is shown to be, not something to be avoided, but something to be rejoiced in, as belonging to the essence of a noble character. Herein Christ sees the truly good man going forth in his might, even suffering, as he tries to do some useful service for his fellows, and so being "made perfect through suffering," as he reacheth forth to yet higher heights of service.

In Christ's own case it was clearly before His vision, that he was to accomplish man's deliverance by the splendid self-sacrifice of Himself, and not by saving Himself. The good shepherd was one, who cared for the sheep, and for their sake exposed himself, even when attacked by dangers, while the hireling fled, just "because he was an hireling, and cared not for the sheep." Hence Christ said, "I came not to be served, but to serve, and to give My life a deliverance for men." This was the principle, which became the ideal of His life, and which He embodied, not alone in the great offering up of Himself on the Cross, but always in all His thought, and action, making it the law of His own life, and of the kingdom, which He established, as in these terms, "Whosoever wills to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever wills to lose his life for My sake shall find it."

When Christ used the words, "For My sake," He laid stress on a view, which we have already noted as important. For what is here asked for is

not sacrifice merely, not martyrdom for martyrdom's sake, but rather a sacrifice for some high and worthy end, for the good of mankind. Here then suffering is to be for His sake, Who so completely identified Himself with our race. Nothing human was alien to Him, Who was our brother born, and rejoiced in being called the Son of man. It is thus taught that if man would help on the coming of the kingdom of God, he must be willing to suffer even the loss of all things and to surrender everything, which in any way stands in the way, as a barrier or hindrance to the true good of men. Self, and self-interest must not be allowed to block the pathway of doing good. In the case of the good man this must be true, as the poet sings,

Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the
chords with might ;
Smote the chord of self, that trembling pass'd in music
out of sight.

In our consideration of what science had to teach, we saw how a great purpose was running through all things, and how man could only find his calling in a clear and hearty obedience to this purpose. Now this purpose is the will of God, and for this will man must surrender his own even though this entail suffering upon him. The individual self must find his end in doing not his own will, but that will, which is not only God's will, but the good of all. This Christ taught, and this Christ did.

Before His vision humanity lay, as something to be delivered, and deliverance, He saw, could only come one way, even by His standing in the breach, and allowing the whole weight of the sin of men to fall on Him. He could not stand aside, but must under the law of His own being, all divine, go on to bring man back to God. He saw that man had brought upon himself so much sorrow, and misery by utter selfishness, which disregarded man, just because it disregarded God. Man sinned against God in caring supremely and alone for himself, and in ceasing to care for others; thus he created wrong conditions of life, in which the evils of life were only increased, and intensified. Self-assertion had gained some temporary triumphs in apparent outward prosperity, and this had made self-assertion more prominent, and more pronounced as a means of success, but this was done with evil consequences to many.

In this self-assertion Christ saw the root of sin against God, and of wrong to man. Hence He lived a life of supreme self-sacrifice, and proclaimed such a life as obligatory on all, who would follow Him. He saw for man a glorious goal in the favour of God, and in communion unceasing for evermore with His heavenly Father, which He Himself enjoyed, and to reach the goal He taught man must adopt His way. In suffering for the removal of sin in its great, and fruitful cause, Christ would have men learn that they are to be prepared to suffer too in order to remove the evils by which they and others are surrounded.

He would have them set before their eyes some great and splendid service, even such as was ever before Him, in the ending of sin's power and dominion in the hearts, and lives of men, and for that end suffer bravely and heroically.

The tendency of many has been to glorify what Christ has done, but not to see that the principle of His acting is to rule their lives too. They have failed to see that the appropriation of what Christ has done can only be theirs in a moral way, even as they receive His spirit, and go out to walk in His footsteps. To be saved by Christ is thus really to have working in ourselves the life He lived. And this cannot be done in any merely mechanical way. The meaning of human obligation, as seen in Christ, is that it has its place in us. "To know the true worship of sorrow venture forward. The altar," says Carlyle, "is still there, and its sacred lamp perennially burning." The justification of the principle, and the method of Christ, will only be found in fulness, when they become the principle, and the method of men.

Froude remarked very truly that, "The government of the world is a problem, while the desire of selfish enjoyment survives." When viewed in the light of the teaching of Jesus, the problem altogether vanishes, for the axe is laid at the root of the tree of selfish enjoyment, and a trumpet call is heard ringing loud that calls to noble self-denial, such as the Christ showed to us.

How great are the evils resulting from selfishness Russell Wallace points out in his last work.

In our unchristianised ways of living men think only of how an action affects themselves, and is fitted the most easily to secure their own ends. The beautiful rivers become their common sewers, and the refreshing air their smoke receptacles, all heedless of results most injurious to the community. The individual exploits the universe for himself. He has to learn a more excellent way, how even by pain and expense to himself he may be a means of blessing to others.

What concerned Christ was the saving of the race, and the perfecting of the whole. For that end He suffered, despising the shame even of the Cross.

Thus are we taught that the suffering of the individual is the means to the perfecting of the whole. And though this is a perfecting, which does not primarily aim at the perfecting of the individual, it is essentially the method by which the individual also is made perfect, as a constituent part of the whole. The emphasis here is laid on the perfecting of the whole. The dominant note is the good of others, and only in and through that comes the good of the individual. "For your sakes I sanctify Myself." Let us notice how Christ lays the stress upon the social organism as a living whole, and unity.

It is because this aspect of Christ's teaching has not been sufficiently kept in mind that so much harm has been done by a rampant individualism, which has allowed the individual to think mostly of himself, even under the form of saving his own

soul. Each man being left to care for himself, a heart-breaking competition, with many consequential woes, has come into vogue, and has even received the approval of the representatives of the Christian Church. The battle has been fought by the individual for himself, as if he were alone, all heedless of what the results to others might be, and thus in countries, and in a civilisation supposed to be dominated by Christianity, a system has prevailed, which in its very essence is utterly opposed to the foundation teaching of the Master. Selfish considerations and physical, rather than moral qualities are allowed to gain the day.

But as men look more to the ruling spirit of Christ, as that which is to be their guide, than to mere doctrines about Him, which they are called on to believe, they will be constrained to have that mind, which was in Him, and "to mind, not their own things, but the things of others." They will think more of the kingdom, more of the community. And so also the Church, set in the midst of men to leaven the whole lump, and to lighten every land, and all the people, will become a more effective means of all well-being. It is this that gives us hope for the future of our holy religion, that men are more clearly recognising, that its essence lies in the effort to build up a true society or brotherhood of men, based on the teaching of Jesus, and inspired by His great doing, which shall be co-extensive with the race, and with no man-made limitations among those, who are all made of one, to dwell on the face of the

earth. To feel that we are all our brother's keeper is to feel ourselves in line and sympathy with Christ.

Contend, my soul, for moments, and for hours,
Each is with service pregnant; each reclaimed
Is as a kingdom conquered, where to reign.

On this view of Christianity there is ample room for splendid heroisms, with all their contagious spirit.

But while the whole is thus a dominant note in Christ's thought, the individual parts receive their highest worth, and most adequate recognition. The whole, and all its parts are bound up in closest possible relationship, and are, indeed, inseparable. Thus what does good to the whole does good to the parts. The worth of the individual, and the perfecting of his character can never pass from sight, nay, it will only receive the fuller value. What harms the worth of the single units is their exploiting the whole for their own sake. The part has its worth and place in the whole and it is just as it contributes something to that whole, that the protection of the whole is thrown around it. Neither what the part gains or suffers is for itself; all is for the whole, and thus all done by the smallest part is really for itself.

It was, then, with the truest understanding of the very mind of Christ that suffering in the New Testament came to have such a prominent place. To St. Paul man's highest dignity was found in

suffering along with Christ, and in making up for the sake of His body, the Church, what was lacking in His sufferings. He himself was started on his mission, with the full conviction, that "he must suffer great things" for Christ's sake. And as a sufferer he wrote to his dear friends at Philippi, that "it was given to them not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His sake."

St. James, too, bids his readers, "Count it all joy, when they fall into divers trials."

And he also writes, "Blessed is the man, that endureth trial, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them, that love Him." St. Peter again says, "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience' sake toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." And again, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if some strange thing happened to you." "In the world," the Christian knows, "he shall have tribulation," but he is bidden be of good cheer, because His Master thus overcame the world. St. Paul had the sublime vision of the true glory those had, who suffered with Christ, and so he could "reckon the sufferings of this present time, not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us." To his enraptured gaze all creation, and all the saints were only in that travail of birth, in all their sufferings, which would emerge in a great issue of good.

The heroes of God come out of all their places of ease, and face the storm, knowing that just in that way they will do a lasting good. Even when suffering is wrongfully inflicted by man, they can be unmoved, and realise that by brave suffering here they may advance some cause dear to the heart of God, and benefit even the wrongdoer, in such a way as to truly change him, by allowing him to exhaust all his power of harm upon him. "There is an alchemy in moral goodness which turns even the sufferings of those who suffer for its sake into a great joy." The joy cannot be had without the suffering, nor the sympathy without the woes. Many a sufferer has thus prevented the repetition of the same kind of suffering, just by the things, which he suffered. The sting driven into him has ceased to sting again. Theirs is this beatitude, "Blessed are they, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now already the true sufferer has supremest joy, and highest heirship; this is his glory; it is heaven begun in a triumphant soul, who has put the world beneath his feet in the best of ways, by making it subservient to the very highest interests of God and man.

The true treatment of the world is, as we have seen, not in ignoring its claims, nor in a supposed trampling of it down, but much rather in a wise and victorious use of all that it supplies, as God's own world, the sphere in which He works, and in which He would have us do all our work

too. The present world is our opportunity, and it is before us as a God-given material, on which, and through which, we are to do all we can.

It is always wrong, as it is foolish, to wish for another, or a better. A belief in God, and Providence excludes any vain imagining about other conditions as possible for us. Even the thought of this as the best of all possible worlds proceeds on a wrong hypothesis. It allows the suggestion of contingency to enter in, the idea that things could have been other than they are. On the contrary, what is is God's world, and it is the only one, that could have come to be.

And this we know, that God has been manifesting Himself in human history, and just on this arena, through His noblest and best. What He has been doing in the past, He is doing in the present, and will do in the future yet more abundantly, because His creatures become ever more fully responsive to His will, and seek ever more and more to do its great requirements. At the centre of all things is a beating heart, which suffers and overcomes. God, as we have seen, does not remain in isolation from what has been called the chain of cause and effect, from a nature supposed to have laws of its own. No, all is His, and the laws by which all things exist and fulfil their purpose are His laws, by Himself devised, and by Himself directed. The supernatural is not a sphere by itself, but the very heart of the natural, and what is supernatural to us is natural to God,

as what is natural to us is just the sphere in which God works.

In this way, a true view of life would not ignore any facts or differences that emerge, but rather would seek for a full and complete synthesis, in which they shall all be harmonised. No part is to be crushed, each fact is to be recognised, and raised to its full meaning and significance. We must not antagonise God or hold Him in disdain, or in any wise, "set His high omnipotence at nought."

It is, of course, always difficult for men swayed by false categories to get rid of the idea, that pain is an arbitrary element, a something that might not have been. But if we look at things, as they are, and disabuse our minds of superinduced opinions as to possibilities, we shall find out the truth in things and in their evolving process. What is apparent discord is really harmony, what is apparent only as pain is really a means to truest joy, if only understood, and thus we can say with Browning,

Why else was the pause prolonged, but that singing
might issue thence.

Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be
prized?

There is a moral order, which we have to discover, not to make. "We do not create the moral world by our moral action. The process of morality is a process of interpretation, of obedience, and of the appropriation of that

which is, and which is deemed right and good." God's will is there, and our prayer should be, let it be done. "It is the ignorant and the capricious spirit that finds the universe unsatisfactory."

In the great vision of the Apocalypse, as the white-robed and crowned martyr throng are seen standing before the throne, and the question is asked, "Whence came they?" the answer is given, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation." They suffered that the kingdom of Christ might get itself a footing in the world, and by suffering so, they became the seed of a multitude, that no man can number, out of every land. In the spirit of their Master they aimed not at personal gain, and were counted worthy to suffer, finding their true nobility in suffering in a noble cause.

Men are ever wrongly advised to seek happiness for themselves; rather should they be told to seek pain, if so be by that pain some real and lasting good for their fellows may be accomplished. "Seek pain, not joy," said Nietzsche, for truest joy comes through that pain, which brings about some true result. Robert Louis Stevenson, a sufferer himself writes,

For still the Lord is Lord of might;
In deeds, in deeds He takes delight:
Those He approves, that ply the trade,
That rock the child, that wed the maid,
That with weak virtues, weaker hands,
Sow gladness on the peopled lands.

The elimination of pain from the world is, doubtless, contemplated by Christian thought, but it is viewed as something to be eliminated by the pain that is borne by the brave and the true of God's own chosen people. Thus well are we urged by him whose words are used above,

Leave not, my soul, the unfoughten field, nor leave
Thy debts dishonoured, nor thy place desert,
Without due service rendered.

If all creation is in travail, and to a superficial glance, apparently in vanity, to a deeper, truer sight, it is all in hope. The manifestation of the sons of God is what is the aim and goal of all its working. In this, suffering is indissolubly bound up, and it has in itself now, and not simply in a future development a joy unknown, save to him that has it. Hence the apostle speaks about "sorrowing and rejoicing," not as two distinct moments, the one following the other, but as two aspects of the one real, deep experience.

The individual in this way, truly, finds his perfecting in being baptized into the spirit of Christ, and so animated and inspired by the principle, that was dominant in His life. That will become the law of his life, not simply because it was enshrined in that of Christ, but because, being the law of all worthy life, it was accepted by Christ. Thus grace, which we associate with Christ, as coming into the world in its fulness in Him is to be the law of the true life. Here is the

principle of the "second mile," or that of the little more, which is of such supreme value in conduct, making it so essentially different, when it is seen to be the ruling thought. This was, as Harnack has well remarked, "the new truth men derived from the Cross of Christ. It flowed out, like a stream of fresh water on the arid souls of men, and their dry morality." This led men to act, as Mark Rutherford puts it in describing true excellences of character, as seen in some friends, "Did any mischief befall those they knew, without any blaming, they set about immediately repairing it, with that silent promptitude of nature, which rebels not against a wound, but the very next moment begins the work of protection and recovery."

As in Christ, so in every true man, love must rule. He cannot stand on the other side, and aloof from those in trouble, but must be with them and for them, with a healing power. Admiration is not only given to Christ for embodying in Himself the law of love, so as to save mankind, but true, nay, the only real honour given to Him will be the translation into men's own lives, of what is found in His. Thus only will men move on to higher attainments, as they never count themselves to have attained, but press on to the mark of their high calling in Christ Jesus. In such noble natures there will be no complaining of the suffering, that comes in ever more strenuous striving after the good of man, but a deep sorrow that their efforts have fallen short of what they

might have been. For such there will be no lying down, nothing of the life at ease which only drifts. In their case there is

The eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks.

It has been said that the sacred "influence of pain is unmeaning apart from immortality," but this is to take away from the pain all the joy that is involved in the act of self-denying service. Tennyson has beautifully set forth this thought, as he sings,

They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

I found an angel of the night,
He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seemed to touch it into leaf.

And herein is the Everlasting Yea,—“Love not pleasure, but God.” “It is,” says Goethe, “with renunciation that life properly speaking only begins.” The most divine in us is the virtue of helpfulness, and most truly,

No gain
That I experience must remain unshared.

An old writer said, “God is the helping of man by man,” and kings who had the power of rendering such help, were deified under such names as Epiphanes, Euergetes, and Soter (Saviour). And

man most truly God-like shows, when he bears the burdens of his fellow-man. In this way true religion too appears,

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small.
For the great God, Who loveth us,
Both made and loveth all.

Vicarious suffering, or suffering of each for all, running as a law through the whole scheme of things, foreshadowed in Greek Tragedy, and declared in Isaiah liii., though sadly misplaced, when purely individualistic ideals ruled in thought, and religion, finds its supreme proclamation and embodiment in Christ, and in a Christianity, which would more truly carry out what He taught, and lived.

And this is the best in every true human heart, as it is the ruling instinct, and only waiting for full and fitting expression. The mother-heart bleeds and suffers for her child, in a self-forgetfulness divine. Hence Ibsen gives us this dialogue between Johann and Martha,—“I have been a mother,” said Martha, “to that much-wronged child, and brought her up, as well as I could.”

“And sacrificed your whole life in so doing.”

And Martha replies, “It has not been thrown away.”

No, indeed, for “the sufferings of the righteous are the saving thing in human history.” Perhaps Robert Burns looked at the matter from a partial

point of view, but spake much that was of value for his time in words like these,

We learn our creed,
The social, friendly, honest man,
What e'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great nature's plan,
And nane but he.

It is now only necessary that we should in a few closing sentences sum up the main considerations, which have been passing through our mind in these pages,

The great work of "Job" gave us our theme, and raised for us the question as to the meaning of suffering in relation to the moral order of the universe. First of all, our attention was drawn in a very striking manner by the piteous cry of "Job," and we had the case of the righteous man suffering. Obviously this must have its explanation in a world of reason, under the good government of God. The mind refuses to accept the view that here there was something, which could not be explained, something wholly mysterious as a fate, or arbitrary edict of the Gods, that rule. A reason was demanded, and that in no irreverent spirit, in no merely questioning; or sceptical spirit. And reasons were given.

These various reasons were in turn examined, and found wanting. The ever-widening and fuller experience of life clearly proved that the old view that suffering came as a punishment was wholly inadequate to explain things. It was seen, of

course, that violations of the laws of God in nature brought about their own reactions in pain, and sickness, but it was manifest that many suffered, in whose case there was no immediate violation of law. Nay, it was the fact of the good man suffering that raised the whole question.

Then the view that suffering was the result of chastisement was suggested. This explanation, also, was found not to meet all the facts of the case. For again, much pain could be accounted for by causes at work in life, and in the case of the good there was an element of choice, whereby they took upon themselves voluntarily much suffering for others, to advance the interests of truth, and to end the pains of those, who were suffering sorely.

As our inquiry advanced, we saw how the relations of God to man were ever being made more clear, and more worthy, as man was discovering more of God in His constantly unveiling, or revealing of Himself in history. God was being seen ever more and more as a God worthy of being trusted, and worshipped, while the great universe was seen to be His, and the means of carrying out His supreme purpose. In this was seen constantly at work the splendid principle of altruism, ever seeking, and finding a better expression.

With advancing thought, and the giving up of poorer views of what God in His nature is, and how He works among men, through His own laws,

emphasis came to be laid on the sublime principle that pain is involved in all onward striving, in all true love. Thus the way was prepared for the life of Christ, in which was seen as its very essence this principle of self-sacrifice, as the necessary law of all true life. In service and in the using of one's self, and of all that one has for others, rather than in the having of large abundance, was seen to lie the true life of man.

Thus the suffering, which would arise from the losing of things, if that should bring about any good to others becomes ennobled, and ceases to be matter of complaint. The man of God now learns that the loss of all that he has is no proof of the divine disfavour, but rather an opportunity in which his goodness may even be made more manifest in a devoted service. Thus he may take even "joyfully the spoiling of his goods" for he has this better inheritance, even the favour of God, and the doing of good to men. He is in the highest conception of his worth, a man of the spirit, and can live, even amid the wreck of all former things still in fellowship with God, doing what Jesus did. He will allow nothing without, in a changing world, to rule over him, but he will use everything as a means of loving service. "The truly richest man is not he that has the most, but he who needs not ought." He rejoices in having much, because he can do the more for God, and man; with what he has, even though it be but a little, he can still serve God, and thus glorify his Maker. Only that man

suffers uselessly and unworthily, who dwells in "cold, self-satisfied, trivial, and ungenerous thoughts." Says Maeterlinck, "The loftiest reasons for sorrow must be on the eve of becoming reasons for gladness, and joy."

And our happiness cannot remain with us, unless we confer it on others. Herbert Spencer tells us that, "The individual, whose worth consists in his contributing to the community must voluntarily sacrifice himself to the interests of the social organism," and more and more we are seeing that the interests of the individual are being identified with those of society as a whole. "Goodness goes ever on to complete itself in sacrifice." Pain is seen to be in all striving, and in this striving for the betterment of things is found the glory of man. Stop striving, says the pessimist, and so end pain. Strive on yet still better, cries the noble soul, and so surmount the pain. Thus true life takes hold on things, as with both hands, and brings about without wondering,

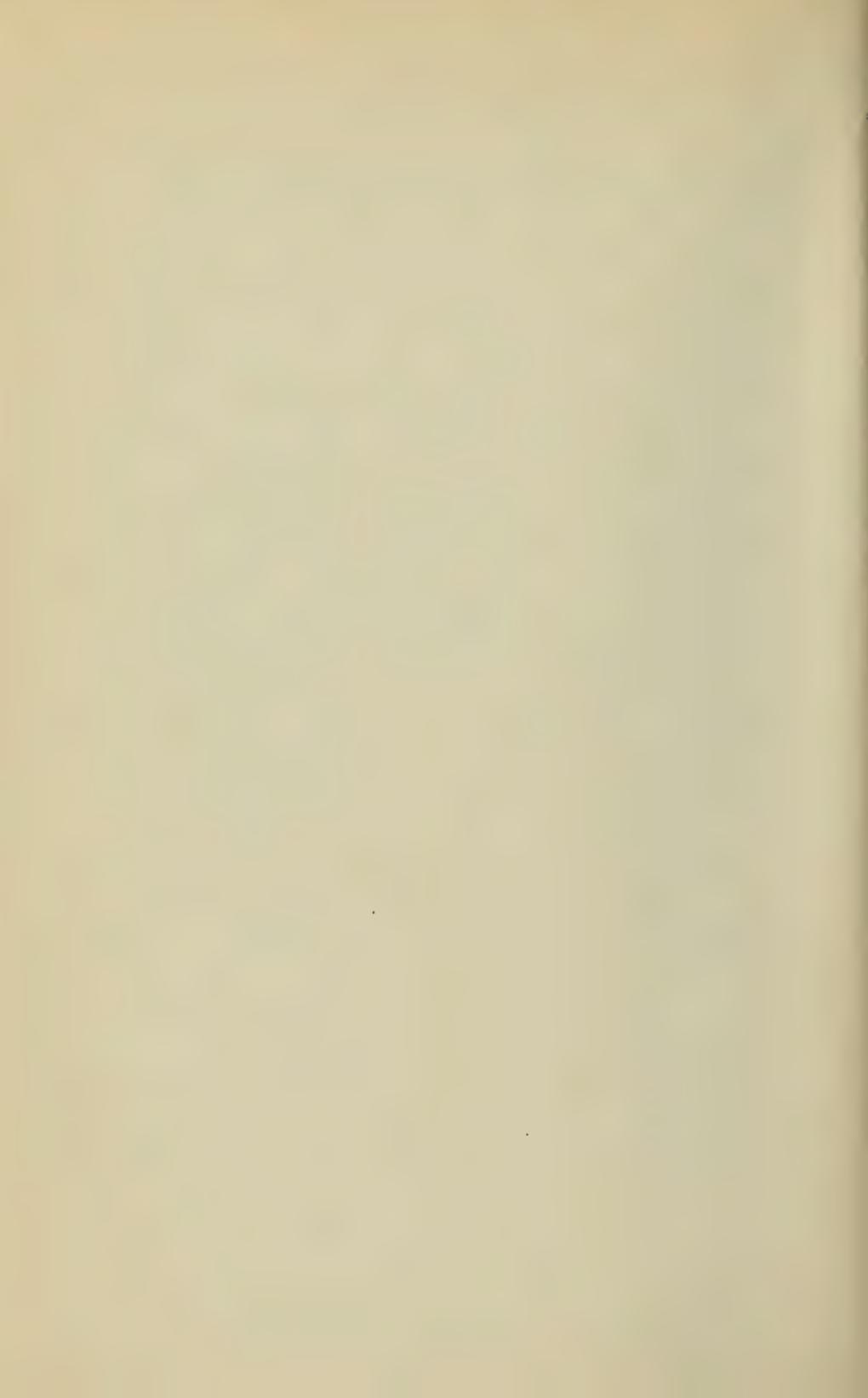
The bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers.

The pain and effort of it all make men greater, who were great before, and bid them step out still more bravely on life's great arena.

In the Book of "Job" there are marks of a supreme conflict, and that conflict is one that has been waged all down the ages. Such conflict can only end one way by knowing more of life, and

discharging its pressing duties in a brave and hopeful spirit. While we may agree with the protest of the Pragmatism of Professor James that no final formula will explain a universe that is still going on, we do most firmly believe that in the life and work of Christ, we have a solution of this great conflict of the ages, because in His spirit we can be more than conquerors, and it is His overcoming spirit that this and every age requires, and in this is our peace, and victory.

Following Him, in the glorious company of martyrs, let it be ours to bind up human woes, and bring men and things around us into a great reconciliation, even with God Himself. In every age it has been man's highest mission to reshape the world, and putting ever higher values on life, and its possibilities, to create truer and better conditions. The great healing salve for life is provided by Christ, and in a clearer, and firmer grasp of Him lies our hope, and our inspiration. In our own age, and at our own doors there is much yet to be done to give our holy faith finer, and more complete expression. And the call rings out with splendid appeal to every listening ear, and heart, Who follows in His train?



APPENDIX

CONTAINING PASSAGES OMITTED IN THE TEXT, WITH NOTES OF EXPLANATION

Chap. iii. 12 explains ver. 11, and is thus an unnecessary addition:—

Why took they me on knees to rest,
And gave me chance to suck the breast?

Ver. 24 is a comment on ver. 23:—

Before I eat, I pour forth sighs,
And like the rivers burst my cries.

Chap. iv. 8–11. These verses are proverbial sayings:—

As I have seen, Those that plow sin,
and sow iniquity reap the same. They are destroyed by the breath of God, and are consumed by the blast of His anger.

The lions roar with dreadful noise, and the teeth of the young lions are broken off. The old lion dieth for lack of prey, and the whelps of the lioness are scattered far.

In chap. v. ver. 1 interrupts the speech:—

Call now if there be any that can answer thee, or any of the saints, to whom thou canst turn!

Ver. 7. For “spark,” eagle—bird may be read
 Ver. 10 breaks the connection :—

He causeth rain to fall on earth,
 And sends on fields the water forth.

Ver. 23 contains a repetition of ver. 22 :—

Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts
 of the earth,
 For thou shalt be in league with the
 spirits of the fields.

The words in chap. vi. 7 and third line of ver. 10
 are later. While ver. 14 is difficult, and not suitable
 in the mouth of “Job” :—

Who has no care for one in doubt,
 The “Fear of God” knows not about.

Ver. 27 is not clear, and is not relevant here.

In chap. vii. ver. 11 is too full, having three lines.
 Note the better reading in ver. 20. The Scribes
 read “my” for “Thy” in supposed reverence for
 God. In ver. 20 two lines are added :—

If I have sinned, what matters it,
 To Thee, who judging man dost sit?

In chap. viii. vers. 6, 7 are a gloss, and they are
 not found in the LXX.

Ver. 10 weakens the passage.

In vers. 14–19 we have two added illustrations :—

(1) THE FOOL (vers. 14, 15).

His hope's like thread that spiders thrust,
And like a web his inner trust.
He leans on it! It doth not stay!
He grasps it firm! It breaks away!

(2) THE WEED (vers. 16-19).

Before the sun, it green is found,
It spreads its roots along the ground.
Its rootlets twine about the well,
And in the midst of stones they swell.

If cut from where it grew, it dies.
That it was there its place denies.
This is the end that for it lies,
And others in its room arise.

Chap. ix. 10 is a repetition from chap. v. 9. Ver. 29 is a prosaic addition, in a single line.

Chap. x. 1 in third line contains a repetition of a line in vii. 11. There is a line too many here, as also in ver. 17.

In chap. x. ver. 3 is a note added. It makes three lines for the verse:—

And shine upon the counsel of the wicked.

In ver. 15 also there is an added gloss, again making three lines for the verse:—

I'm all confused! O see Thou mine affliction,
for it increaseth much!

Ver. 22 with its third line is an enlargement of what goes before (ver. 21).

In chap. xi. ver. 6 there is an added comment, with a sting of its own, in the third line. The words make the verse too long.

Chap. xii. 3 has a line too many, which is found in xiii. 2.

Chap. xiii. 17 is an interpolation.

In chap. xiv. 4 the last line is incomplete, and words are supplied from Psa. xiv. 3. In ver. 5 there are three lines, and the third is transferred to chap. xiii. 27 to make a complete verse there.

In chap. xv. vers. 5, 6 break the connection, where they stand, and come in better after ver. 12.

In ver. 24 "As king for battle" is added.

The verses 25–28 supply some particular case of proud defiance :—

'Gainst God he stretched his arm at length,
And 'gainst th' Almighty gathered strength.
He runs upon Him to defy,
With buckler's bosses thick in ply.

Great fatness spread his face around,
And on his sides was fatness found.
He dwelt in towns of folk bereft,
In houses which had all been left.

The first line of ver. 20 is a repetition of first line of ver. 22.

Ver. 31 is explanatory, and could come suitably after ver. 35 :—

Let not deceived ones trust the vain !
For vanity will be his gain.

In chap. xvi. vers. 9–11 we have a special case also. Ver. 9 has three lines :—

My foe 'gainst me makes sharp his eyes,
 His mouth against me opened lies !
 Reproachfully they smite my face,
 Collecting round me take their place.
 For God hath to the bad me given,
 And with the wicked hath me driven.

Chap. xvii. 4, 5 contain a note not found in the LXX.:—

Thou hast from wisdom hid their heart,
 And in high place given them no part.
 Of those who mark their friends for prey,
 Their children's eyes will soon decay.

Verses 8–10 come better after chap. xviii.
 In ver. 12 there is an extension of the text.

Chap. xviii. 14 interrupts the sense.

Chap. xix. 12 suits chap. xxx. 12 better.

In chap. xxi. ver. 33 has an added note in a third line.

Chap. xxii. 12 inserts a comment.

In chap. xxii. ver. 24, 25, and in chap. xxiii. ver. 17 are explanatory of what goes before.

Chap. xxiii. 14 adds a truism.

The words in chap. xxiv. 14–18 interrupt the sense here, and form a complete poem.

In chap. xxx. 1 we have words added later, as in chap. xxxi. 23.

Chap. xxxiii. 11 is a variant of ver. 10. So also are the verses in chap. xxxiv. 25–28 of the lines that precede.

The words, “He clappeth his hands among us,” in chap. xxxiv. 37 unduly lengthen the verse.

From chap. xxxiv. ver. 3 is transferred to xxxiii. 15.

In chap. xxxvii. vers. 4 and 5 are a variant of what goes before.

The second and third lines of ver. 23 and ver. 24 are an editorial addition.

In chap. xxxviii. the second lines of vers. 13, 14, and ver. 15 break the connection :—

And thus the wicked have their place,
And ever stand in deep disgrace.
For from the bad removed is light,
And their strong arm is broken quite.

Ver. 28 is added :—

Hath the rain a father true,
And who begot the drops of dew ?

In chap. xxxix. ver. 28 simply repeats ver. 27.

In chap. xli. ver. 24 is clearly out of place here.

The last line of xlvi. 6 is too short, and needs a verb.

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